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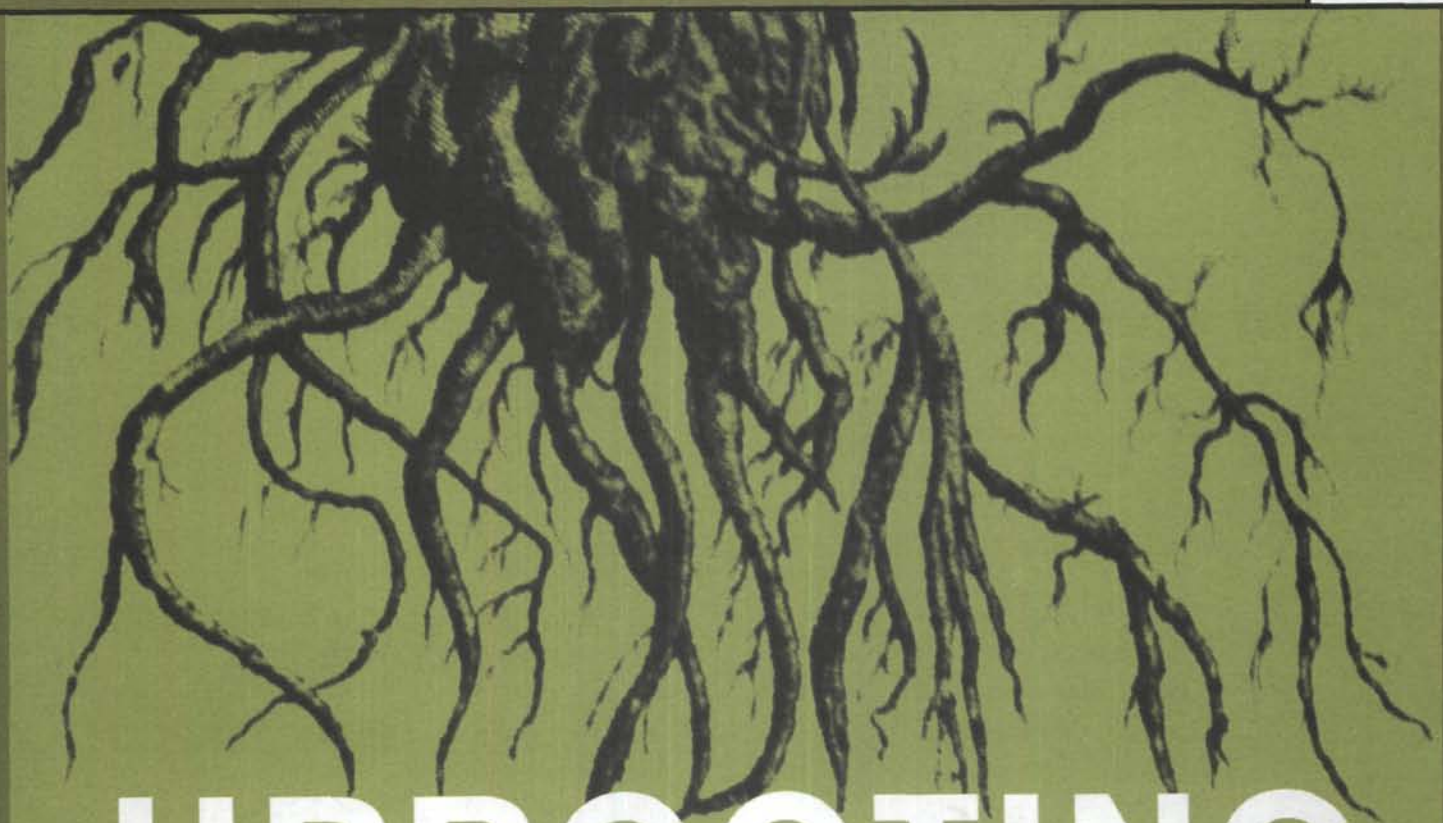

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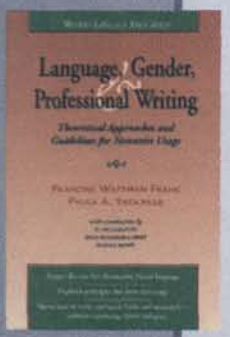

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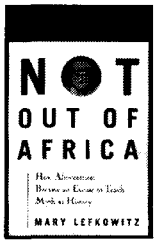

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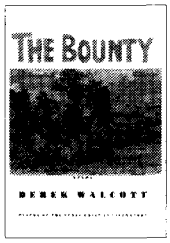

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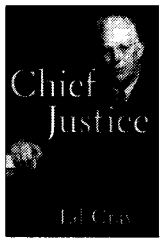

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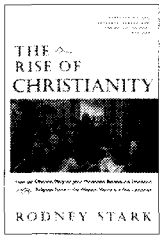

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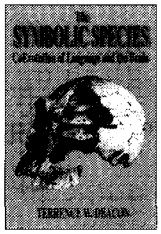

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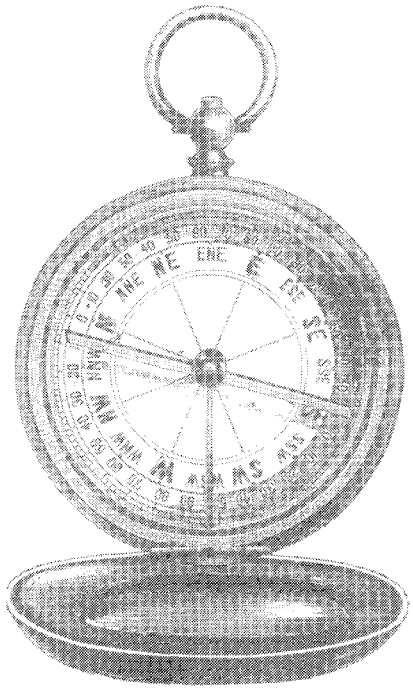

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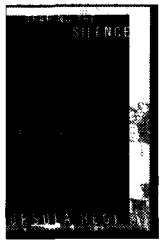

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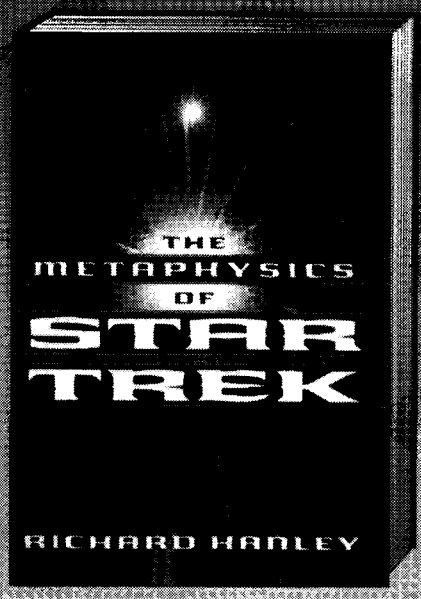

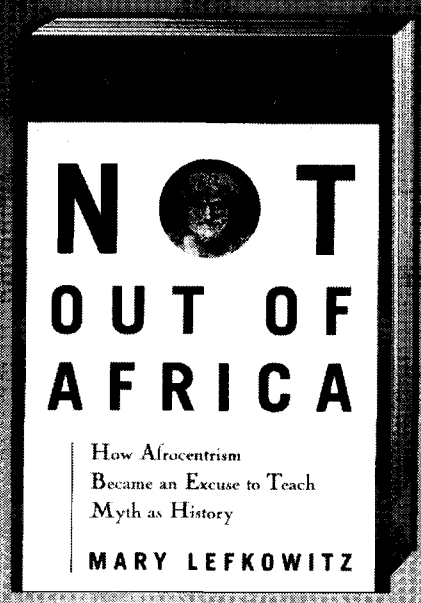

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IN DEFENSE OF DIFFICULTY

Pardon me for calling this Borgesian. But how else might I understand this? A magazine like *Lingua Franca,* committed consistently to the commonsensical (which it sometimes conflates with the popular), publishes for a change, in a story coincidentally on Borges, a fine defense of the difficult, the ambiguous, and, indeed, the academic ["Stranger Than *Ficción,*" *LF* June/July]. Where Matthew Howard returns again and again to Borges's blindness and insight, we confront writing as an unequal and somewhat skewed practice of representation. This, whether by editorial writ or not, I'm happy to note, is a small but sustained obsession in the pages of the June/July issue. We see it in Emily Eakin's report on Derrida's curatorial effort, *Memoirs of the Blind,* in which we learn that to write is "to create a self-portrait and to risk blindness." And even in Daniel Zalewski's Field Note on Randy McLeod's Portable Collator—a device that allows the scholar to "see" a book precisely by looking at it upside down.

I remark on this theme not to be pedantic but to note its absence in Pamela Burdman's cover story on the retreat from affirmative action in the University of California system—or, more accurately, in Governor Pete Wilson's and Regent Ward Connerly's repeated invocation of the term "colorblind," a usage that presumes a world from which the difficulties of reading race and class have been or *can be* erased.

This, too, is Borgesian. Wilson and Connerly ham-fistedly invoke a rhetoric of blindness in order to render all difference invisible and make the daily struggle with it meaningless.

In such a context, I'm not satisfied with *Lingua Franca*'s argument that affirmative action proponents do not have a "unifying theory" behind them. That's not the point! Social difference is irreducible to a packaged formula, and an admission of that difficulty, and of the difficulty of representation in general, can only be the starting point for a more honest discussion.

AMITAVA KUMAR
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

TRUTH AND FANTASY

There's a line in M.G. Lord's article "Pornutopia" [*LF,* April/May] concerning my book, *Bound and Gagged: Pornography and the Politics of Fantasy in America,* that needs correction. No, it's not the one about me "gushing," which—although there appears to be a certain metonymic slippage between me and my subjects (I admit to having written of errant bodily fluids on occasion)—at least makes me grateful not to have been described as writhing, moaning, or bucking.

The line is about Daniel DePew, the man imprisoned for thirty-three years for sexual fantasies. Lord writes, "DePew, who confessed to having botched abductions in the past, was convicted by an Alexandria, Virginia, jury of conspiracy to kidnap." The word "confess" here is wrong or, at best, misleading. DePew never confessed in any legal sense of the word, as the sentence seems to imply. He never said anything like this under oath or in an official statement to the police, and, in fact, his refusal to confess remorse to the judge was one reason he was handed such a draconian sentence.

What he did do was this: In the context of lengthy, drunken, sadomasochistically oriented, fantasy-based conversations with two undercover cops who goaded him on, he told a story about a violent incident with a man he'd had sex with years before in Greece. According to DePew, though, he made the

continued on page 57

BOOKEND
Anatomies of a Virtual Self
Joe Amato

"*Bookend* sets the stage for a new kind of writing. Part poetry, part theory, part scholarly exegesis, Joe Amato's book cruises the Information Network, sweeping along, in its rush toward revelation, the flotsam and jetsam of daily life—especially life in the academy—as it is playing itself out in the 1990s. The various 'anatomies,' especially the Anatomy of a Heart, allow us to enter the author's consciousness, and yet *Bookend* remains curiously depersonalized. Amato tells stories, ruminates on poetics, works on his computer, and arranges every page visually as well as verbally. The lettrist 'breakdown' of the last pages is thus entirely anticipated."
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Field *Notes*

A MIND IS A TERRIBLE THING TO WASTE

IMAGINE YOU'RE STEPHEN Hawking, the renowned physicist whose body has been wasting for years from Lou Gehrig's disease. Let's say that doctors have determined your organs have so degenerated that you have only a year to live, even though your mind is fully functional—nay, brilliant. Might there be some other way to keep you alive?

Robert J. White, the director of the Brain Research Laboratory at the Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, thinks there is—or could be, if scientists would get off their collective duff. The answer, he says, is brain transplantation: severing Hawking's head and reattaching it to a headless donor body. White maintains that doing this with monkeys is already possible and envisions a day when victims of fatal head injuries might be harvested not for their organs—but for their entire bodies.

White did not come upon this recycling scenario recently. In fact, between 1961 and 1971, White and his colleagues at the Mayo Clinic and Case Western made incremental but tangible breakthroughs in isolating, preserving, and transplanting severed monkey heads. (One such head survived in its new host for about a week. Though the animal was largely paralyzed, White reports, "It would follow us around the lab with its eyes and almost bit off an investigator's finger.") These findings were published in such august journals as *Science* and *Nature*. "For the first time in the history of medicine," White recalls, "we proved that the body was nothing more than a power pack." By cooling the brain to 1°C, White was able to dramatically reduce the organ's oxygen requirements during the period of detachment; after surgery, the brain could be warmed without sustaining damage. More critically, the brain proved to be an "immunologically privileged" organ—much less persnickety than, say, the liver when it comes to rejecting a new host. The major hurdle remaining, White says, pertains not to switching brains but to restoring severed spinal cords. (That's a big problem, of course: Curing quadriplegia may well be impossible.)

Not surprisingly, White's rather grisly experiments strike many as repugnant. In the Seventies, animal-rights activists denounced him. And today, there is probably not a teaching hospital in the country whose research-review boards would stomach a return to brain transplantation, even for monkeys.

But White is no Dr. Frankenstein. At seventy-one, he is a respected neurosurgeon, still practicing and holding high office at a leading medical school. Both he and his colleagues say his unusual sideline never hurt his career path. Indeed, he recently received a humanitarian award from the American Association of Neurological Surgeons for his pro bono services in his hometown, Cleveland. And White, a devout Roman Catholic with ten children, has even received a papal knighthood and served as an ethics adviser to the pope.

Yet, lately, White has launched a contentious campaign to revive interest in brain-transplant research. Last year, he published a historical overview of brain-transplant experiments in *Neurological Research,* ending with the assertion that, "with time, these unique, neurosurgically designed preparations will find their appropriate place in the broad spectrum of neuroscience investigation."

White says he has no problem reconciling his scientific and religious beliefs. "I would like first to have a more ongoing discussion of the moral and ethical aspects of brain

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transplants, so we could put behind us the notion that one is violating some Judeo-Christian principle," he says. "Also, I would like to be provided with the necessary financing to bring forth these studies, not at a pure-science level but as an appropriately designed human operation. But to do that, you'd have to show that monkeys could live significantly after the procedure."

White acknowledges the controversy that carrying out his research would ignite today, which is why he suggests it might only be feasible in places such as the former Soviet Union, where less government oversight would be a plus. Still, with the advancement of genetic studies, people have some extravagant biomedical dreams—and with so much discussion of the legitimacy of human cloning, it's fair to ask exactly how reprehensible brain transplantation is. Let's say, for instance, that Ross Perot's body was dying but his brain was fine, and he was willing to buy a desert island, build a fully equipped hospital, and pay Dr. White and other consensual physicians to do the surgery. Would there be anything wrong with that?

Arthur Caplan, the University of Pennsylvania bioethicist, says that White's ideas—however nobly intended—are burdened by what Caplan calls a high "yuck factor." But it's not just that people are grossed out by the concept. Caplan adds that brain transplantation calls the entire notion of personal identity into question; to put it in Cartesian terms, it forces us to ponder the assertion "I am (only) a brain, therefore I am." Another problem he sees is the safety of the patient in a risky, experimental procedure: Even if both parties gave prior approval, the government or the medical profession might have good cause to prevent brain transplants, just as they now prevent most human vaccine tests and raising children in Skinner boxes.

Of course, the experiment also conjures up the troubling, if thrilling, possibility of immortality—or, at the very least, greatly expanded lifetimes. "One of the values of life is that it's finite," Caplan notes. "If we extend it unnaturally, we begin to cheapen life and make it become bizarre."

> "For the first time in the history of medicine," White recalls, "we proved that the body was nothing more than a power pack."

Indeed, to Caplan, brain transplantation is massively more troubling than cloning. "Objections to cloning rest on the conclusion that we are our DNA, but to me, DNA is merely a program, and there are a lot of factors between what my genes say and who I am," he says. "But with brain transplantation, you're directly altering the essence of who we are."

Most crucially, the main obstacle to brain transplants may come from the demand side. Indeed, there has not exactly been a groundswell of support from people with spinal injuries or Lou Gehrig's disease. "This idea has not been suggested to me by a patient, not even as a fantasy," says neuroscientist Naomi Kleitman, the scientific liaison for the Miami Project to Cure Paralysis. "It's their own body that they want to see fixed. If you ask what they want most, it's not to walk—it's more bowel or bladder control, or an end to pain, or a little more use of their arms. They're looking at incremental improvements. As a scientist, that tells me we have to start with that."

So as a practical matter, brain transplantation may be a dead issue—lingering on only in the pages of philosophy books. But White still dreams of sewing up a brain stem or two. Any takers?

LOU JACOBSON

THE MIRROR STAGE

ACADEMIC READERS SURreptitiously flipping through *People*'s annual 50 Most Beautiful People issue were most likely unsurprised to find Drew Barrymore touting the benefits of body makeup. ("You know you're putting a good thing out in the universe when you put on glitter.") But nestled among the more predictable hunks and hunkettes, they also found two unlikely choices: Pattie Maes, an associate professor at the MIT Media Laboratory, and Paul Sereno, a paleontologist at the University of Chicago.

Since when did professors become pinups? "We always like to sprinkle in a few more ordinary folks," explains Susan Toepfer, the editor of the issue. "Often we have to lower the bar a bit for people who aren't actors and models." Not very far, in these cases. Judging from the photographic evidence, Sereno and Maes are certifiably cuter than, say, Harold Bloom. And even their jobs have mainstream sex appeal: Sereno is known for having dug up a fossil of one of the largest known dinosaurs (*Carcharodontosaurus*), while Maes is sitting pretty as a leading authority on artificial intelligence.

> Since when did professors become pinups?

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The honorees were initially flattered by the news, hoping to do their bit to change the image of the academic as shambling, ink-stained dork. ("I've been applying for years," jokes Sereno.) Maes remembers she was pleased that *People* would use "broad-minded criteria," honoring people for intellect as well as appearance. "I thought, I should do this," she recalls. "A lot of normal people will be able to relate to me and feel happy to see someone who isn't there just for superficial beauty reasons."

Of course, that's all hindsight. The profile—which lauds Maes's "sublime software"—quotes her saying that MIT is "almost a wasteland in terms of beauty. It's not hard to be the prettiest woman if there aren't any other women.... In the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king." Her comments created a mini-firestorm on campus, especially among miffed MIT women. Maes claims she was misquoted, and she wrote a letter of protest, which was published in *People*. (Toepfer responds, "She was not misquoted. She may regret what she said.") Embarrassed by what she now calls an "offensive and dumb" article, Maes says ruefully: "I came off as one of the fifty least likable people."

Sereno, in contrast, was delighted with his portrayal as a modest-yet-dashing, Indiana Jones–ish adventurer: "He scours the desert for old bones...traversing the ancient soil of South America, Asia, and Africa clad in dusty blue jeans and a turquoise earring." Sereno lauds the tastefulness of the *People* pictorial ("they didn't demean you"), contrasting it to the vulgarian display of the notorious "Studmuffins of Science" calendar, in which bare-chested biologists reveal their "favorite organism" and sport honorifics like "Dr. January." "There's a line I would draw," he says demurely.

Sereno got so caught up in the excitement that he even offered *People* readers some beauty tips. Apparently, the desert sand exfoliates better than any apricot scrub. "Go out in the middle of the Sahara for four months without showering," he advised. "It does your skin wonders."

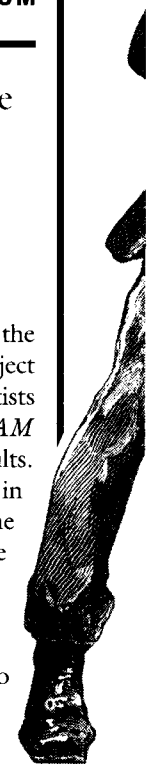
EMILY NUSSBAUM

RAIN MEN

THE WOMEN THE MAYANS sacrificed to the rain gods might well have questioned the ancient art of weather modification. But few are as keen on debunking the modern science of rainmaking—that is, cloud seeding—as Art Rangno, a meteorologist at the University of Washington. When Rangno attacked a series of highly touted Israeli weather-modification experiments in a recent issue of the *Journal of Applied Meteorology (JAM)*, he unleashed a torrent of criticism. Rebuttals from angry colleagues filled seventeen pages in *JAM*'s March issue.

Rangno's reputation for meteorological muckraking isn't new. His crusade dates back to 1970, when, as a self-proclaimed weather nut and storm chaser, he started work on what was then the nation's largest cloud-seeding experiment in Durango, Colorado. Sponsored by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, the project was an attempt to replicate what were considered successful experiments conducted by Colorado State University in the Sixties. Although the project failed, says Rangno, scientists published articles in *JAM* "spin doctoring" the results. "You know that moment in the Black Sox trial when the little kid comes out of the courtroom and says, 'Say it ain't so, Joe'?" he asks. "Well, that little kid represents what happened to me on that project. I've been mad ever since."

> Rangno isn't alone in saying cloud seeding is a twentieth-century rain dance.



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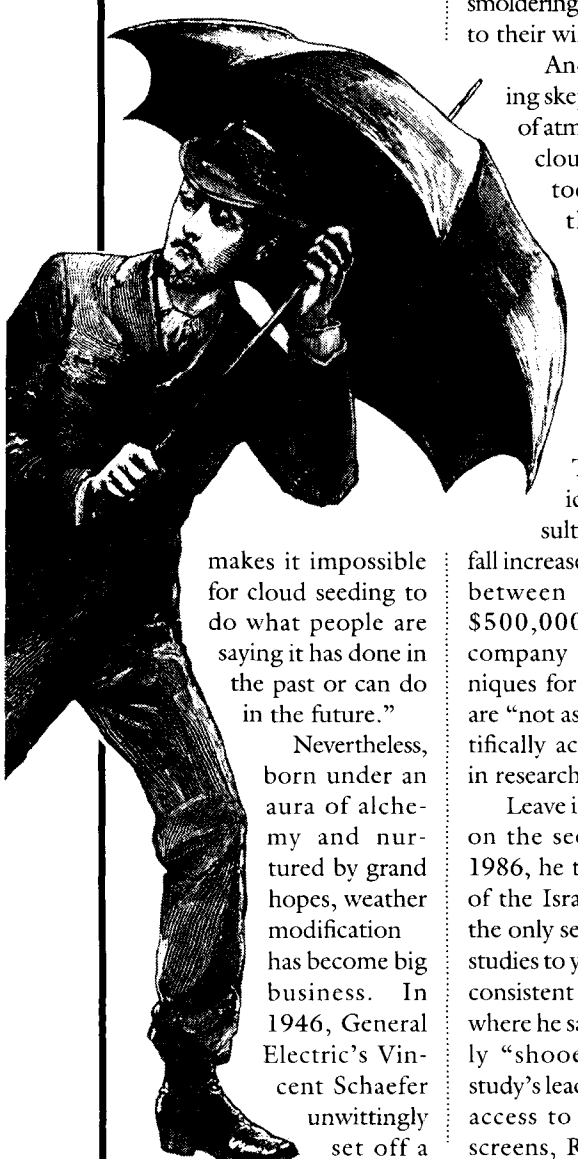
Rangno isn't alone in saying cloud seeding is a twentieth-century rain dance. Most academic meteorologists admit that rain enhancement is a highly uncertain science: It's nearly impossible to predict how much rainfall would have occurred had the clouds not been seeded. "There's a physical basis for cloud seeding, and, yes, you can do it to one isolated stationary cloud," says Colleen Leary, a professor of atmospheric sciences at Texas Tech. "The problem is that the atmosphere doesn't have any neat little edges, so there's all sorts of complicating factors. This makes it impossible for cloud seeding to do what people are saying it has done in the past or can do in the future."



Nevertheless, born under an aura of alchemy and nurtured by grand hopes, weather modification has become big business. In 1946, General Electric's Vincent Schaefer unwittingly set off a snowstorm by placing a chunk of dry ice in a freezer of cold fog. Soon after, his colleague Bernard Vonnegut discovered that silver iodide mimicked the structure of ice but was easier to apply to real clouds. Vonnegut's brother Kurt wasn't the only one who found the iodide experiments inspirational (in *Cat's Cradle,* "ice nine," a blue-white substance that turns everything it touches into ice, is a symbol of technocracy out of control): By the Seventies, the skies above arid lands from Texas to Australia were full of small planes darting in and out of clouds with canisters of smoldering silver iodide affixed to their wings.

And despite increasing skepticism on the part of atmospheric scientists, cloud seeding is used today in more than thirty countries, including the United States, where it plays a role in multi-million-dollar drought-relief programs. In Salt Lake City, TRC North American Weather Consultants promises rainfall increases of 25 percent for between $40,000 and $500,000, although the company admits that techniques for evaluating results are "not as rigorous or scientifically acceptable as...used in research."

Leave it to Rangno to rain on the seeders' parade. In 1986, he traveled to the site of the Israeli experiments—the only set of cloud-seeding studies to yield significant and consistent increases in rain—where he says he was promptly "shooed away" by the study's lead scientists. Denied access to the team's radar screens, Rangno turned to satellite pictures from the Israeli meteorological service and compiled his own data on the site. Then he and colleague Peter Hobbs published their findings in *JAM.* The Israeli experiments, they wrote, were fatally flawed. Citing statistics that showed increased rainfall in both target (seeded) and control (non-seeded) sites, Rangno and Hobbs proclaimed that the Israeli clouds "were not ripe with seeding potential."

Despite increasing skepticism from atmospheric scientists, cloud seeding is used today in more than thirty countries.

This sort of allegation turned out to be the meteorological equivalent of *"J'accuse!"* In the March issue of *JAM,* Rangno's critics let loose. Defending his team's statistics, Daniel Rosenfeld, a leading advocate of cloud seeding at Hebrew University, thundered that Rangno and Hobbs's analysis was "a scattergun attack...that has no basis." The fact that the control site also experienced increased rainfall, he argued, meant that this area had been inadvertently seeded when the planes' chemical cocktails were carried downwind beyond the target site. Arie Ben-Zvi of the Israel Hydrological Service charged that Rangno and Hobbs's citations were "not correct," their data "wrongly stated," and their results "contradictory." One would be "horribly misled" by their critique, added Dr. William Woodley, of Woodley Weather Consultants, a Colorado-based cloud-seeding company.

Clearly relishing his notoriety, Rangno shrugs off the negative press. He points out that most of the criticisms come from individuals closely connected to the experiments in Israel, partners in commercial cloud-seeding operations, or institutions funded by cloud-seeding money. "The further the economic cloud-seeding epicenter from the university," he says, "the more skeptical people tend to be."

Nor—to his critics' evident dismay—is Rangno willing to give up the chase. In a manuscript he plans to submit to the *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society,* Rangno accuses two of the researchers on the Israeli study (one of whom died ten years ago) of manipulating statistics in order to exclude negative results. "Imagine what false accusations on malpractice would do to a medical doctor, even if he is completely innocent," wrote an irate Rosenfeld in an e-mail to *Lingua Franca.* "Water shortage is becoming a major world issue, and cloud seeding is one method that can help alleviate this shortage. Unfortunately, the development of this technology is hampered by people who...make false claims about the research of other scientists."

But clearly Rangno is eager to keep the storm brewing as long as possible. During a recent phone call, he was busy tabulating precipitation statistics from Lebanon dating to the time of the Israeli experiments. Only this data will confirm that what happened in Israel was just a "lucky draw," he says. "You know what?" he muses happily. "I think I'm going to have to go to Lebanon."

LINDA BAKER

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LAST RIGHTS

PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED SUICIDE is among the most painful and somber public policy questions, but it is also—as you may remember from your freshman dorm—tremendous grist for philosophical debates. Want to argue the source of life's value, or problematize "consent," or contest the relation between liberty and equality? It's all here. And although most of the canonical philosophers have denounced any and all suicide, advocates of euthanasia can point to thinkers like Hume (who argued that it is natural and legitimate to seek to escape severe pain) and Nietzsche (who wanted "to die proudly when it is no longer possible to live proudly").

Now six of the United States' most celebrated moral and political philosophers have weighed in on the side of assisted-suicide rights. Last fall, as the justices of the Supreme Court prepared to hear arguments on the subject, they received an *amicus curiae* brief signed by Ronald Dworkin and Thomas Nagel, of NYU; John Rawls, Thomas Scanlon, and Robert Nozick, of Harvard; and Judith Jarvis Thomson, of MIT. This "philosophers' brief," as it has come to be known, was easily the most conspicuous of the sixty briefs that were filed with the court. It argues that both ethical principles and our constitutional tradition demand assisted-suicide rights for the terminally ill and permanently injured. Citizens "must not be forced to end their lives in a way that appalls them, just because that is what some majority thinks proper."

The philosophers' intervention began last summer. NYU law professor Sylvia Law, who had offered advice to a team of lawyers preparing one of the pro-legalization suits that led to the Supreme Court's deliberations, suggested to her colleagues Dworkin and Nagel that these cases would lend themselves well to philosophical argument. Dworkin, who also holds a position at Oxford, drafted much of the brief and assembled the team of co-writers. The six authors are all philosophical liberals (no critics of "rights talk" here), but the differences among them are vast. Rawls, for example, famously argues that liberal principles are compatible with ambitiously egalitarian welfare states; Nozick maintains just the opposite. Despite these tensions, all six are profoundly opposed to philosophical critiques—Thomist, communitarian, poststructuralist—of autonomy and individualism. And they saw the assisted-suicide debate as a crucial battle for these cherished principles.

In the end, the philosophers' arguments failed to convince their core audience on the bench—in June, the justices unanimously refused to recognize a constitutional right to assisted suicide. Still, Team Dworkin's work merits at least a footnote in American philosophical history: This is the first time a self-defined group of moral and political philosophers has intervened in Supreme Court litigation.

And there are other stakes beyond the Court. Four years ago, in his book *Life's Dominion* (Knopf), Dworkin lamented that the thought of political philosophers and other theorists has "not yet improved the quality of public political argument as much as [it] might have" because it has too rarely been oriented toward concrete policy debates. In this regard, the brief has attracted considerable attention. Its full text was published in *The New York Review of Books* in March, and it has been fervently debated ever since. (Besides being denounced in such conservative journals as *The Weekly Standard* and *First Things*, the brief has been attacked by not one but two political philosophers in *The New Republic*.)

Among the brief's more admiring critics is Michael Sandel, the leftish Harvard communitarian theorist. He charges that the authors rely on an incoherent and unattainable ideal of government neutrality and that a system of legalized suicide would inevitably damage the interests of society's weakest citizens. (Public opinion seems to map this fear: According to one poll, the Americans most likely to support assisted-suicide rights are young, white affluent men.) But Sandel has high praise for the philosophers' efforts to clarify policy debates. "The brief is an excellent example of the ways in which academic political philosophers can contribute to public discourse," he says. "Although I very much disagree with them, I admire and applaud their contribution."

Other critics are not so generous. "How much philosophy is there, actually, in this brief? This seems very, very dubious," says Robert George, a Princeton professor of politics. He points especially to the brief's discussion of the 1990 *Cruzan* decision, in which the Court first acknowledged that seriously ill patients have a "liberty interest" in withdrawing from life-sustaining treatment. The philosophers' brief holds that a right to withdraw from treatment necessarily implies a right to request active assistance in dying. There is no meaning-

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ful ethical distinction, it argues, between passive and active intervention by doctors; it is the patient's wishes that make the difference.

But George contends that this discussion fails to engage with (or even acknowledge) the tradition of philosophical arguments about "intentionality." In his view, there's a crucial distinction between intending death as a result and accepting it as a foreseen side effect. "Sophisticated people have thought about these issues literally for centuries," he says. "There is a perfectly straightforward way to distinguish between what the Court said in *Cruzan* and a general right to assisted suicide." NYU philosophy professor F.M. Kamm, who supports limited assisted-suicide rights, also faults the brief in this regard. Writing in the *Boston Review*, she charges that the brief "neglects the moral force of the distinction between killing a person and letting her die.... [If a patient] asks for assistance in killing himself when it is not in his interest to be killed, it might well be morally *im*permissible to kill him."

Scanlon counters that the authors of the brief "have thought about and argued about [the distinction between killing and letting someone die] among ourselves for many years. We disagree about the exact answer. What we agree on, however, is that none of us would defend a distinction that would draw a line between cases like that dealt with in the *Cruzan* decision and those that are up for decision in this case.... It is not plausible to claim that, when a person is in a situation in which dying sooner is a good rather than a great evil, it is morally permissible to help bring this good about by removing life support but not by providing medication that the patient requests in order to achieve a less painful death."

> This is the first time a self-defined group of moral and political philosophers has intervened in Supreme Court litigation.

As the assisted-suicide debate continues to stir passions, will the philosophers' brief prove to have met Dworkin's standard of "improv[ing] the quality of public political argument"? And will political philosophers find other chances to make similar interventions? At least one of the brief's authors, Thomas Nagel, believes that philosophers should choose their public battles sparingly. "The thing about politics is that it requires endless repetition," he says. "You have to go out there and say the same thing again and again. That's really not the best way to operate if you're a serious academic thinker."

Public philosophical arguments can also be dangerous: As Socrates is said to have remarked at the trial that led to his own community-assisted suicide, "Had I decided long ago to become active in public affairs, I would be long dead by now and would have been no use to either you or me."

DAVID GLENN

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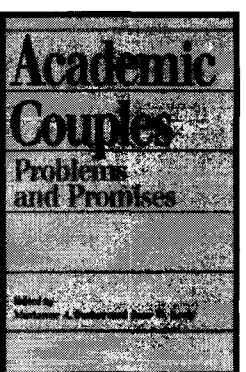

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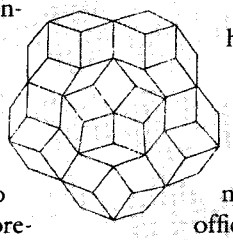
PAPER TRAIL

BEST KNOWN FOR HIS CONtributions to the theory of consciousness, British mathematician Sir Roger Penrose has recently turned to more corporeal concerns: toilet paper. When the wife of the eminent Oxford don wanted to replenish the family supply a year ago, naturally she opted for a few rolls of the soft stuff with the embossed designs. Now, thanks to his wife's sharp-eyed suspicion, Sir Roger, along with Pentaplex Ltd., a puzzle and board-game manufacturer, is suing Kimberly-Clark, the makers of Kleenex quilted toilet paper, for alleged copyright infringement.

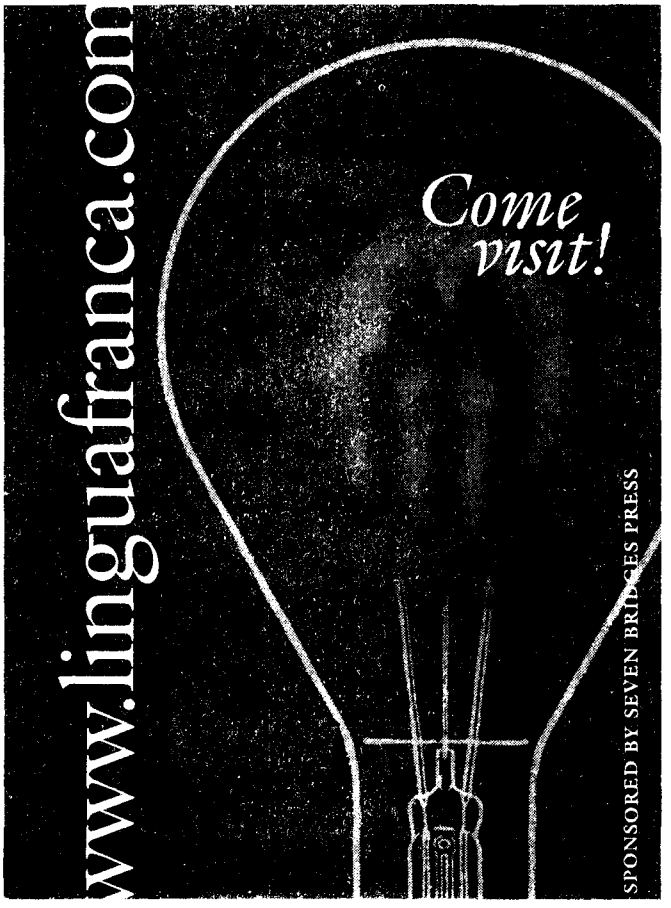
No ordinary geometric arrangement, the plaintiffs claim, the pattern on the Kleenex tissue is nothing less than the Penrose Arrowed Rhombi Tilings pattern, which Sir Roger discovered in 1970—and licensed with Pentaplex. The design has a couple of nifty attributes: aperiodicity (the pattern almost but never quite repeats itself) and fivefold symmetry (a trait which at the time was thought not to exist in nature but has since been identified in rare crystal formations). In the more exuberant words of the London *Independent:* "This non-repeating aperiodic pattern was no trivial solution to relieving the boredom of tiling the bathroom floor, nor some mathematician's doodle. It was a mind-boggling, preconceptions-shattering illustration of fivefold symmetry, 'non-computability' and, quite possibly, the meaning of life."



If Kleenex quilted toilet paper *does* turn out to exhibit the Penrose pattern as the plaintiffs allege, is it possible that Kimberly-Clark could have stumbled upon the design accidentally? Or does the coincidence suggest a calculated feat of espionage and engineering? Kimberly-Clark officials won't comment on the suit, but in the meantime the London *Times* offers us this helpful explanation: "Quilted tissue has the advantage of achieving softness and absorbency while using less paper. In addition, a pattern that does not repeat itself regularly has the advantage that successive layers on the rolls are less likely to stick together."

EMILY EAKIN

Sir Roger Penrose has turned to more corporeal concerns: toilet paper.



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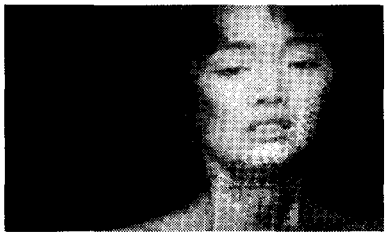

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Thomas J. Sugrue, associate professor of history at the University of Pennsylvania and author of *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Post-War Detroit* (Princeton, 1997).

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• • • •

James Patterson, professor of history at Brown University and author of *America's Struggle Against Poverty, 1900–1994* (Harvard, 1995) and *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945–1974* (Oxford, 1996), winner of the Bancroft Prize.

Patterson recommends ***From Opportunity to Entitlement: The Transformation and Decline of Great Society Liberalism*** (Kansas, 1996), by **Gareth Davies**. This book "argues that the American welfare state has come full circle with the reforms of 1996. Davies, a British scholar, laments the historic enthusiasm for 'entitlement liberalism'—such as guaranteed annual income programs—championed by the National Welfare Rights Organization, George McGovern, and other advocates of a 'New Politics' in the Democratic Party since the mid-Sixties. Davies argues that their efforts—however unrealized as policy—undermined the 'venerable tradition of liberal individualism' developed by FDR and Lyndon B. Johnson. Thus he ventures a provocative conclusion: In rejecting the New Politics, President Clinton is simply returning to the organizing principles of the Great Society."

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Alan Wolfe, University Professor at Boston University and author of *Whose Keeper?: Social Science and Moral Obligation* (California, 1991) and *Marginalized in the Middle* (Chicago, 1996).

"Preoccupied with economics and politics," notes Wolfe, "we sometimes forget that the welfare state has been a great exercise in applied moral philosophy. **Avishai Margalit**'s ***The Decent Society*** (Harvard, 1996) presents arguments in the rigorous style of British analytic philosophy about why no one should be humiliated. In an ideal world, we seek justice; in this world, we can realize decency, and the welfare state can help us do so. To save the welfare state, we need to be reminded why we created one, which Margalit effectively does."

• • • •

Linda Gordon, professor of history at the University of Wisconsin, editor of *Women, the State, and Welfare* (Wisconsin, 1991), and author of *Pitied but not Entitled: Single Mothers and the History of Welfare* (Harvard, 1995).

"As conservatives try to undo the welfare state in the United States, it seems important to trace its vulnerability. Comparative studies can help, but the sociology and economics scholarship usually neglects historical process, without which it's hard to understand how some countries and not others came to foster a commitment to social cohesion and citizenship. One good study that illuminates this process is **Susan Pedersen**'s ***Family, Dependence, and the Origins of the Welfare State: Britain and France, 1914–1945*** (Cambridge, 1993). Pedersen shows how resource transfers in different directions construct different welfare regimes. In France, for exam-

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ple, a fear of a decline in birthrates led to a system that transferred resources from those with few or no children to those with many. The resulting French child-allowance program was more generous than its counterpart in England, despite a stronger feminist campaign for such a program there."

....

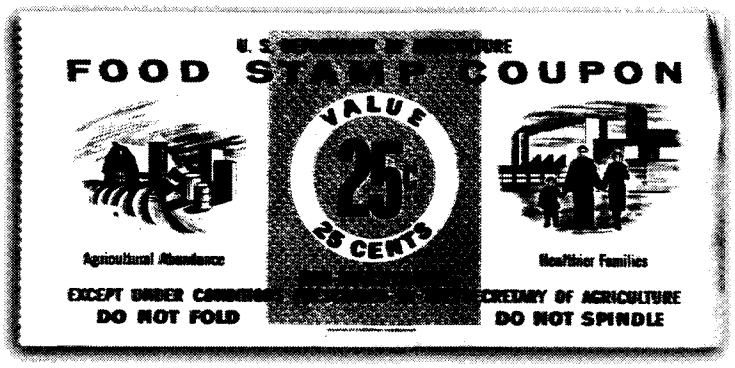
Myron Magnet, editor of *City Journal* and author of *The Dream & the Nightmare: The Sixties' Legacy to the Underclass* (William Morrow, 1993).

"There is no better guide to the underclass—the greatest beneficiaries of the welfare state and the greatest reproach to it—than **Theodore Dalrymple**'s ***If Symptoms Still Persist*** (Andre Deutsch, 1994). Dalrymple, a columnist for the London *Spectator*, understands that the welfare state is, among other things, a state of mind—a belief system that sees no point in making any effort at self-improvement but that stays fixed firmly in the present, with its fleeting pleasures and its sense of resentful entitlement. It is this worldview, says Dalrymple, that keeps the inner-city poor imprisoned in failure from generation to generation—and it is a worldview that judges, social workers, journalists, and politicians continually encourage the underclass to accept. *If Symptoms Still Persist* is filled with extraordinary insight and written in a prose that provides literary pleasure of a high order."

....

Peter Edelman, professor of law at Georgetown University and former assistant secretary for planning and evaluation in the Department of Health and Human Services (1993–1995).

"My passion when the subject is the American welfare state is what we do and, increasingly, don't do about the poverty of families with children. Two recent books I think everyone should read are **Jonathan Kozol**'s ***Amazing Grace: The Lives of Children and the Conscience of a Nation*** (Crown, 1995) and **William Julius Wilson**'s ***When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor*** (Knopf, 1996). You can't read Kozol without realizing how destructively simplistic the bumper-sticker, one-size-fits-all premise of the new welfare law is. With his usual power and eloquence, he lays bare the realities about the hand we deal poor families and children, especially African Americans and Latinos, who struggle to survive in the forced isolation of the inner city. Wilson is the coup de grâce because he demolishes the blithe assumption that the jobs are out there, ready and waiting, if people would just get off their behinds and make an effort. The new law assumes the problem is 'them'—the people on welfare. Kozol and Wilson insist this is a vast oversimplification."



....

Geoffrey Eley, professor of history at the University of Michigan, author of *Reshaping the German Right: Radical Nationalism and Political Change After Bismarck* (Michigan, 1991), and editor of *Society, Culture, and the State in Germany, 1870–1930* (Michigan, 1996).

"Our understanding of the German welfare state and its political complexities has been transformed by a stream of first-class historical work. **George Steinmetz**'s ***Regulating the Social: The Welfare State and Local Politics in Imperial Germany*** (Princeton, 1993) investigates the pre-1914 origins of the welfare state, undermining crude arguments about the period's continuity with Nazism. **Atina Grossmann**'s ***Reforming Sex: The German Movement for Birth Control and Abortion Reform, 1920–1950*** (Oxford, 1995) persuasively demonstrates how the modernizing vision of liberated sexuality, comprehensive welfare, and rational living was mixed up for the Nazis with other, more sinister objectives involving social discipline and the ordering of populations. **Robert G. Moeller**'s ***Protecting Motherhood: Women and the Family in the Politics of Postwar West Germany*** (California, 1993) is a vital study of the gendered politics of welfare since World War II. These three works—which normalize the German case without denying its perversion under Nazism—brilliantly establish the centrality of welfare to political conflict under twentieth-century capitalism, and they are essential reading for comparative purposes."

....

James T. Kloppenberg, author of *Uncertain Victory: Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and American Thought, 1870–1920* (Oxford, 1986) and *The Virtues of Liberalism: American Political Argument* (Oxford, forthcoming).

Kloppenberg reviles the "quest for the holy grail of a transnational explanation for the rise of the welfare state—the number of exceptions equals the number of nations." **William J. Novak**'s ***The People's Welfare: Law and Regulation in Nineteenth-Century America*** (North Carolina, 1996) is "a stunning account of a previously unknown universe of state and local laws that regulated nearly every aspect of early American economy and society. It demonstrates that post–Civil War laissez-faire did not grow naturally from earlier national traditions but radically altered them." Regarding the post–Civil War period, Kloppenberg recommends **Daniel T. Rodgers**'s ***Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age, 1870–1945*** (Harvard, forthcoming), "an exhaustive study that should sober anyone still intoxicated by the prospect of finding general explanations for the rise of 'the welfare state.' None of the existing models of welfare-state formation adequately captures the complexity of the evidence Rodgers presents."

RICK PERLSTEIN

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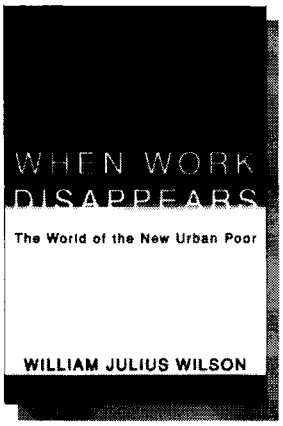

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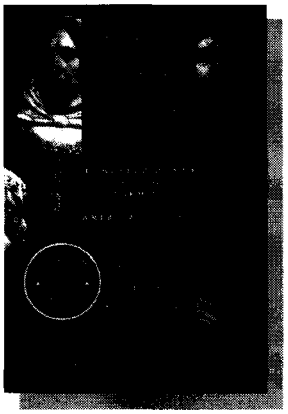

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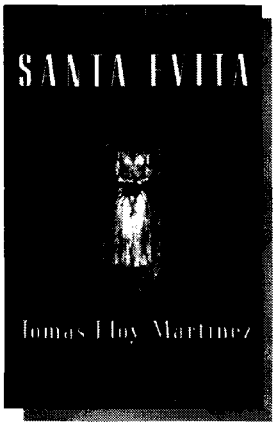

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Inside*Publishing*

KISS AND TELL

OF ALL THE IMPROBABLE CHARACTERS OF the late eighteenth century, Giacomo Casanova (1725–1798) is today the most famous by name. He is certainly one of a tiny handful, along with Napoleon and de Sade, to have left a linguistic legacy. But whereas the megalomaniacal Corsican has been reduced to a lowly pastry, and his debauched contemporary to a psychological disorder in the *DSM-IV*, Casanova has lent his name to nothing less than, well, Casanovas. A restless flâneur of a dozen capital cities and twenty times as many boudoirs, he pulled off Western literature's most spectacular act of self-promotion, guaranteeing himself immortality through a vast memoir written in French and now handsomely republished in English by Johns Hopkins. In *History of My Life*, he slyly enshrines his expertise in an area where his credentials could not be verified by pusillanimous critics: the bedroom.

Casanova, however, was more wildly protean than his legend would imply. By turns gambler, occultist, amateur diplomat, professional hanger-on, violinist, translator of Homer, mathematician, and director of the French lottery, Casanova prided himself on his dancing and his French accent. But the cantankerous bibliophile of later years never imagined he would christen a thousand eponymous Romeos. If he dreamed of future fame, it was as a courtier, a belletrist, or a superior gossip of the beau monde.

Yet curiously, the reality behind the Casanoving remains almost totally unknown, even to literati. The text he left at death, written while he worked as an embittered old librarian in the service of Count Waldstein at Castle Dux in Bohemia, ran to over four thousand manuscript pages. Thereafter, it followed a checkered history, being published first in an 1822 German translation and then in an inaccurate and moralistically meddling French text of 1826. Not until 1960 did a definitive French version at last appear. This text, in turn, became the basis for the present English translation by Willard R. Trask, which was first published—unfortunately to widespread neglect—by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich in 1966.

"It was brought out in dribs and drabs over a five-year period between 1966 and 1971," explains Douglas Armato, manager of Johns Hopkins's book division. He adds: "And the volumes had a flip-case design, which lent them an air of antiquarian obscurity." Not so with the new edition, which sports a luscious nude stretching across the spines.

Trask's English, reproduced in its entirety from the earlier edition, faithfully adheres to Casanova's elegantly expedient French. Aside from his attempts at fashionably monumental science-fiction novels like his unsuccessful *Icosameron* of 1788, Casanova was a lucid if occasionally pompous stylist, lacing his text with his adored Horace and Ariosto and often protecting his heroines' identities with initials and asterisks—grammatical equivalents of the famous Venetian mask.

"In the beginning of August 1733," Casanova writes matter-of-factly, "my organ of memory developed." In one of the most spectral episodes of the memoirs, he ponders his earliest recollection, a violent nosebleed associated with his infantile epilepsy. Convinced of his idiocy, his grandmother took him to be cured by a witch on the island of Murano. There the eight-year-old had his first encounter with the female sex, albeit of the supernatural variety. A flirtatious fairy descended from the chimney in the middle of the night dressed in "a huge pannier...with a crown on her head set with a profusion of stones." After an elaborate magic ritual, she kissed him, curing his epilepsy and nosebleeds and arousing his carnal proclivities.

Indeed, when his mother, a traveling actress known as La Zanetta, came to visit him at school in Padua, the ten-

> If Casanova dreamed of future fame, it was as a superior gossip of the beau monde.

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year-old Casanova improvised a joke for her in Latin: *Discite grammatici cur mascula nomina cunnus et cur femineum mentula nomen habet? Disce quod a domino nomina servus habet.* (Tell us, O grammarians, why the male genitals are a female noun and the female parts are masculine? Because, they say, the slave always takes the master's name!) On hearing this, La Zanetta, we are told, proudly bestowed a gold watch upon the young prodigy's teacher.

History of My Life gives us a catty and supple panorama of a European society that eerily prefigures our own. It was a world in the process of disintegration, in which women exhibited sexual boldness—hence innumerable convents filled with middle-class girls recovering from illicit abortions. To his female contemporaries, Casanova seems to have been the ideal companion. Classless and rootless, willing to take seriously both women's sentiments and intellects, he inspired enduring affections.

His correspondence with many of his lovers spanned thirty years and thousands of pages—unfortunately, it's not included in any edition of the memoirs. In the memoirs themselves, these women remain mysteriously elusive: the cross-dressing Henriette; the subversively voluptuous and intellectual nun M** M**; the wounded C** C**; the coldly treacherous Charpillon; the charming Mimi; the courtesan Ancilla, who was made love to by the libertine John Murray as she lay dying of the pox—while Casanova watched. This nightmarish demise the writer chronicles with typical detachment: "It was one of the most striking spectacles I had seen in all my life. The cancer which ate away her nose and half of her beautiful face came up again from her esophagus two months after she believed she was cured of the pox by mercury ointment."

Nevertheless, the amorous episodes are just that, episodes—some of them probably invented with a good deal of novelistic bravura. It is the memoirs' picaresque social sweep that strikes us now rather than its salacious particulars. There is no pornographic prose to speak of. Everything is draped in decorous eighteenth-century euphemism. "'I do not want,' she said with a smile, 'to be bothered with keeping your quintessence from falling on the carpet.'" And then again, sometimes the verbal posies become insipidly matter-of-fact. "I have found," he writes, "that the smell of every woman I love is agreeable to me."

Casanova eventually ran afoul of the state inquisitor Antonio Condulmer, a corrupt womanizer and investor in a theater whose productions Casanova had lambasted in the press. In 1755, on charges of sorcery and subversion, Casanova was imprisoned in the Leads, Venice's infamous prison, from which he made a sensational escape the following year. Predictably, he turned the exploit into a slim book, which earned him some international notoriety.

Thereafter, Casanova became a perpetual and desperate wanderer across the Continent under the sobriquet of Chevalier de Seingalt, always hoping for a reprieve from Venice but never quite obtaining one. He consorted with Voltaire, Rousseau, and Frederick the Great (or so he says), but his forced nomadism seems finally to have worn him down, and he was obliged in his old age to accept the patronage of Waldstein and his gloomily provincial castle—happily for us the impetus for his most impressive feat.

Today, Casanova lives on as a louche noun—one that has about it all the allure of cheap aftershave. But is it possible that he is about to be reborn, not as the immortal lover but as the boulevardier of all boulevardiers and the wiliest bluffer of them all?

LAWRENCE OSBORNE

STRANGE FRUIT

IN AN EYE-CATCHING EXPERIMENT THAT has created an uproar among American historians, *The Journal of American History* (*JAH*) recently published an anguished essay on lynching by the distinguished historian Joel Williamson, along with the unexpurgated responses of his peer reviewers. Instead of keeping the editorial process cloaked in its usual secrecy, David Thelen, the journal's editor, coaxed all the parties into having their contributions published in their raw, unrevised state. Without having read one another's remarks, they agreed to go public. Shortly after, however, the experiment blew up in their faces. "I've heard more comment about this than about almost anything that's appeared in the journal in my recollection—most of it negative," reports Eric Foner, a professor of American history at Columbia University.

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It's not hard to fathom why. At the center of the controversy is an apparent racial split: Williamson's four white readers recommended the manuscript for publication; his two black readers tore it apart. With Op-Ed-style photographs of the respondents placed beside their remarks, the roundtable in the March issue has the look of a willful editorial provocation. Complains historian Robin Kelley, one of the dissenting panelists and a member of the *JAH* editorial board, "The presentation deliberately played up a false dichotomy between blacks and whites."

Disavowing any plot to stage a racial melodrama, Thelen claims the exchange on Williamson struck him as "an opportunity not only to publish good conversation about why history matters but also to answer another common request from our readers: to demystify our own practice...for scrutiny by readers." There's no reason to doubt his intentions. After all, the peer-review process tends to generate fascination. Surely a peek behind the curtain was long overdue.

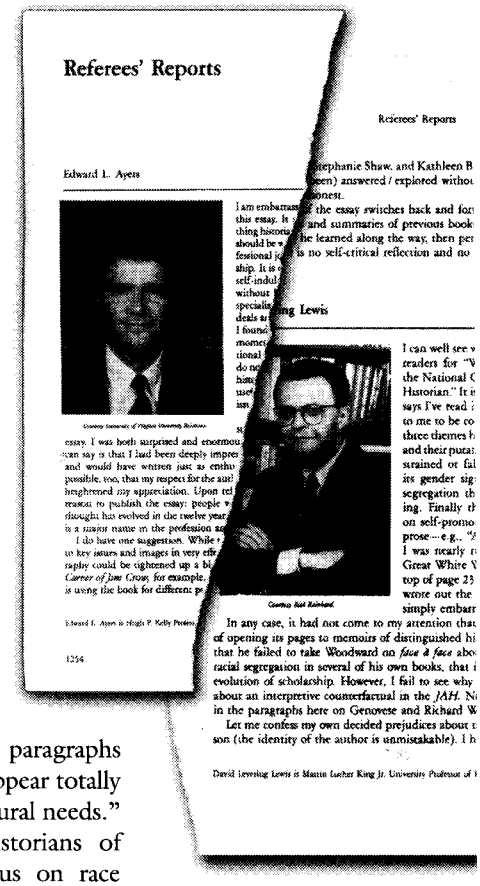
Still, if the editors' purpose was to air the buzz behind the scenes, their choice of occasion was extraordinarily odd. For Joel Williamson's "Wounds Not Scars: Lynching, the National Conscience, and the American Historian" is not, by any measure, a scholarly monograph but a supremely quirky bricolage of personal memoir and historiography.

Williamson, a sixty-eight-year-old professor of history at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, is an eminent scholar of race relations in the post–Civil War South. In his lamentful and occasionally moving rumination, the professor describes himself as "the prisoner of my birth and rearing." He claims that, as a white Southerner, he grew up largely ignorant of vigilante violence, nourished by a "culture that was amazingly effective in erasing some parts of its history." His intellectual heroes—C. Vann Woodward above all—helped maintain the taboo by diligently tracing the origins of segregation, while neglecting to write about lynching. Only in the mid-Sixties, when he stumbled upon newspaper accounts from the 1890s of black men burned at the stake, did Williamson perceive that lynching was America's hidden "holocaust." The nexus of race and lynching became his obsession; in works like *The Crucible of Race,* he depicted anti-black violence as an extension of the white elite's efforts to transfer its base of power from black slaves to poor whites. And yet, he writes, he still remained trapped by his identity—only this time it was a "gender cage." Feminist historians, notably Jacqueline Dowd-Hall, were transforming the study of Southern history and the meaning of lynching along with it. Once again, he felt eclipsed.

It's rare for a historian to admit to his blind spots, much less to a history of blind spots: Williamson's sincerity can't be denied. Yet it is hard to believe him fully when he says that "nothing in my living experience as a southerner and as an American prepared me for this [the horror of lynching]." Not the church bombings or Bull Connor's dogs? Nor is it easy to accept Williamson's call for historians of lynching to give priority to gender over race: He looks forward to the day when scholars represent lynching as having "more to do with relations between white men and white women than with relations between blacks and whites." As for previous scholarship, he hopes "those vestigial and fading paragraphs on slavery and race relations will disappear totally as no longer very relevant to our cultural needs."

Williamson's argument that historians of lynching should abandon their focus on race is pretty odd, considering that lynching took the lives of more than three thousand black men from the 1890s through the 1930s. What's more, no one besides Williamson is making it, least of all the feminist historians from whom he claims to take inspiration. In her pathbreaking 1979 study *Revolt Against Chivalry,* Dowd-Hall indeed argues that lynching enabled white men to resist the political demands of white women, who were fenced in by their fear of the mythical black rapist; she does not, however, gloss over the terror visited upon black men, their families, and their property. The point of the feminist scholarship is that race and gender are intertwined, rather than—as Williamson seems to feel—separate and competing.

"It's a case of a very good historian writing a very mediocre piece," says Sean Wilentz, a professor of history at Princeton. "There are interesting bits in it, but they don't add up to a compelling article." Why then did four of the readers recommend publishing it? The fact that it was a memoir, and a gutsy one at that, may have disarmed some of


Referees' Reports

Edward L. Ayers

David Levering Lewis

EDWARD AYERS AND DAVID LEVERING LEWIS IN *THE JOURNAL OF AMERICAN HISTORY*

If the editors' purpose was to air the buzz behind the scenes, their choice of occasion was extraordinarily odd.

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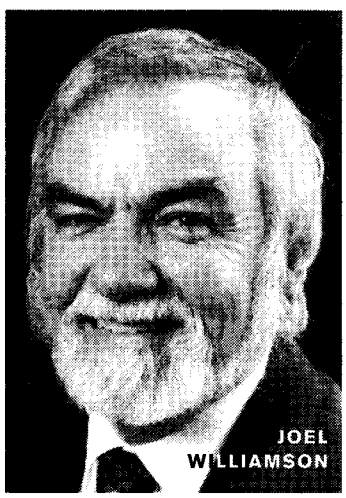
Williamson's readers. Then there was the fact that Williamson's first-person references to his own work left no doubt as to his identity. Robin Kelley says that "once the author's identity becomes clear, and it's a great guy like Joel Williamson, there's a real reluctance to reject." And, apparently, a reluctance to analyze too closely. After noticing several "assertions that go unexamined"—particularly Williamson's idea of a monolithic black culture—David Blight, a professor of black studies at Amherst, retreated, saying, "These are minor points for discussion." If Edward Ayers and George Fredrickson, both esteemed American historians, were at all bothered by Williamson's bizarre statement that the Anita Hill case "would echo in gender terms the racial message broadcast by the Supreme Court in the *Dred Scott* decision," they did not say so. Could they have been favorably influenced by the fact that Williamson had lavishly praised them in his essay? In an interview with *Lingua Franca*, Ayers insisted this was not the case, although he admitted to being "enormously flattered."


JOEL WILLIAMSON

For their part, Robin Kelley and David Levering Lewis were unswayed by the awareness that this was a memoir by a noted historian. Lewis disparaged the Anita Hill–*Dred Scott* comparison: "Surely the consequences of the Thomas confirmation vote were exactly the reverse [of *Dred Scott*'s disenfranchisement of free blacks]. Senators found themselves scrambling to placate and apologize.... The Judiciary Committee is now coeducational, and the national life has been transformed." As for Kelley, he chastised Williamson for speaking on behalf of "the American historian" and "we Americans": "Williamson cannot and should not say 'we' unless he specifies who he's talking about." To Kelley, Williamson seemed alarmingly ignorant of the black and radical white scholars who knew and wrote about lynching long before Williamson's "discovery." In making these trenchant arguments, however, Kelley seemed to miss the point of Williamson's essay: While Williamson had indeed not done his homework, he was now attempting to apologize for it.

Was this, as some historians are saying, a woefully symptomatic episode of what Stanley Crouch calls the "all-American skin game"? If so, the reasons were other than what one might suppose. The racial split did not consist in any shattering epistemic differences. One can easily imagine a different division with, say, a white neo-Marxist echoing Kelley and an older black scholar appreciating Williamson's candor. Ultimately, the central drama of this peer review turned not on race but on how to evaluate an autobiographical manuscript that was clearly the work of a prominent (and well-liked) member of the club. If the *JAH* has done any harm, it may not have been so much to race relations among historians as to their public reputation. While it's unclear whether the scholars who approved the article were consciously relaxing their standards for Williamson, their standards seem to have been mighty low that day. As Wilentz quips, "If this is a window onto how historians operate, someone ought to consider dropping the blinds again."

ADAM SHATZ

THE RADICAL IMAGINATION

PARIS IN THE FORTIES WAS A CITY AWASH IN forged identities and remade lives. But few transformed themselves as completely as Cornelius Castoriadis. When the young Greek émigré arrived, in 1945, he settled down to write a doctoral thesis on the inevitable culmination of all Western philosophies in "aporias and impasses." But by the end of the decade, he had quit academia to lead a curious double life. As Cornelius Castoriadis, he worked as a professional economist, crunching numbers at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Meanwhile, adopting a number of aliases, he developed one of the most influential bodies of political thought to emerge from the non-Communist left over the last half century. Castoriadis's covert writings helped to rally France's beleaguered anti-Stalinist left in the Fifties and to inspire the spectacular Paris revolt of 1968.

Yet even as other intellectual heroes of Paris '68 marched on to academic renown in the United States, Castoriadis's work has remained little known in this country. That may change this year: As he turns seventy-five, academic presses are generating the biggest wave of Anglophone publications by and about Castoriadis yet. *The Castoriadis Reader* (Blackwell), with representative extracts from almost fifty years of political and philosophical writing, reflects his long march from Marx back to Aristotle. *World in Fragments* (Stanford) presents a selection of readings from Castoriadis's recent work, including papers on ancient Greek democracy, the French Revolution, psychosis, racism, and the history of science.

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA/DAN SEARS

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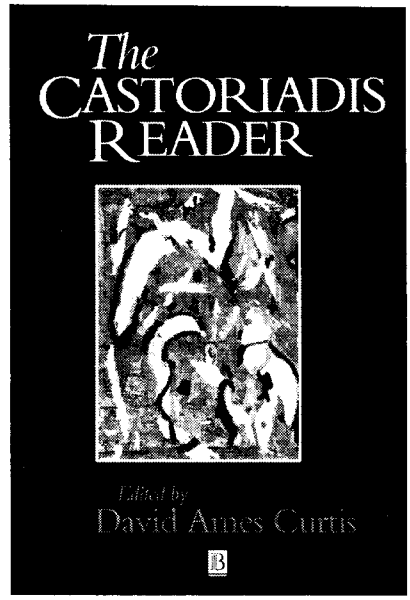
(Both volumes are edited by David Ames Curtis, who for the past decade has been the Greco-Parisian thinker's authorized translator, and each bears cover graphics by Castoriadis admirer and renowned jazz improvisationalist Ornette Coleman.) Meanwhile, *The Imaginary Institution of Society*—Castoriadis's theoretical magnum opus, first published in 1975—is finally available in paper from Polity, after a decade of hardback near-oblivion. In these books, the high abstraction of his philosophical excursions alternates with an acid wit, trained by years of polemical writing. Typical is Castoriadis's pithy remark on the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics: "Four words, four lies."

Though Castoriadis's work started out within the Trotskyist tradition, it soon transcended those origins. By the late Forties, he saw in American mass production or the Russian labor camp the embodiments of a demented rationalism: an economic will to power that constantly engendered unforeseen crises in the division of labor and responded with totalitarian measures in a desperate effort to avoid its own collapse. In the Fifties, Castoriadis analyzed the "bureaucratic capitalism" of Stalinist Russia, explored the philosophical implications of the 1956 Hungarian revolt against Soviet rule, and scrutinized the wildcat strikes of Detroit autoworkers in search of new forms of proletarian self-organization.

Castoriadis took seriously Trotsky's dictum that the future of humanity was a choice between socialism and barbarism—with the USSR being, for him, a decisive example of the latter. A circle of workers and intellectuals (including Claude Lefort, now a leading political philosopher) collaborated in hammering out a radically anti-hierarchical conception of direct democracy. To readers of the group's now-legendary journal *Socialisme ou barbarie* (1949–1965), Castoriadis was known as "Paul Cardan," among other signatures; for, as a foreigner, he could be deported with twenty-four hours' notice—making the occasional change of pseudonym an understandable precaution, whatever the confusion to the public. Not that there was much of an audience: Given the intimate relationship between intellectuals and the Communist Party, he might as well have been writing in Greek. In 1967 the members of the group voted to disband.

Then, in May 1968, everything changed. Students at the Sorbonne erected barricades and called on the workers to launch a general strike, which they happily did; and the vision of revolutionary spontaneity and worker self-management elaborated by Castoriadis and a few comrades years before suddenly went marching into the streets. In a manifesto, the student radical leader (and later Green Party politician) Daniel Cohn-Bendit, best known as "Dany the Red," acknowledged the influence of "the ideas of Pierre Chaulieu," another Castoriadis pen name.



In the early Seventies—as the rest of the intelligentsia caught up with the ideas he had helped launch years before—Castoriadis obtained French citizenship. He proceeded to reprint the old texts from the *Socialisme ou barbarie* years under his own name. After quitting his job as an economist to begin training as a psychoanalyst, he was not more gentle in his critique of Lacan than he was with Stalin. Meanwhile, by the late Seventies, his warnings about the Soviet Union's arms buildup were regularly cited by the New Philosophers, whose work was all the rage at the time. Countless intellectuals began recalling fondly their days as militants in *Socialisme ou barbarie*—which was surprising, for its membership seldom rose above the high two digits. "If all these people had been with us at the time," Castoriadis noted wryly, "we would have taken power in France sometime around 1957."

In his own intellectual projects, Castoriadis certainly does his best to resist what he calls "the glutting of the market by plastic 'pop' philosophical collages." He focuses, throughout his work, on the question of "autonomy"—the process and condition in which a society recognizes that its values are its own creation, not "given" (by God, or nature, or the mode of production). Yet the potential to create new forms of social relation is constantly hidden—by precisely the institutions society has already generated. "The guiding thread running throughout my writings," Castoriadis explains, is "the obsession with the risk that a collective movement might 'degenerate,' that it might give birth to a new bureaucracy (whether totalitarian or not)." His examples of creative autonomy in action are suggestive in their variety: the city-state of Greek

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antiquity; the Paris commune; the shop-floor organizations that keep factories running (no matter how stupid the bosses' orders may get); the formal innovations of modernist art and jazz; the activism of Poland's Solidarity trade union in the Eighties.

As the final essay in *The Reader* makes clear, the threat of bureaucratic ossification is by no means averted by the collapse of Communism and the near-collapse of the welfare state. Castoriadis takes little joy from the sight of a population that "plunges into privatization, abandoning the public domain to bureaucratic, managerial, and financial oligarchies," succumbing at last to the "generalized conformism ...pompously labelled postmodernism." (The remark is that much more pointed when one recalls the name of another ex-*SouBer*: Jean-François Lyotard.) And there is more than a hint of Spenglerian gloom in Castoriadis's argument that "the process of competitive decadence" between the old Soviet regime and its Western counterparts yielded not a revolutionary upsurge but a pseudo-paradise of consumerist passivity. Should American academics choose to ignore his ideas about autonomy—preferring, instead, to celebrate laissez-faire or the delights of "transgression"—that would not surprise a grizzled polemicist like Castoriadis. After all, as he once wrote of intellectuals, "Paper bears anything; so does a certain public."

SCOTT MCLEMEE

BOURDIEU UNPLUGGED

PITY THE FRENCH. AS A PEOPLE, THEY HAVE long labored under the illusion that television is an instrument of culture—and not, as Americans have always known, the other way around. So when the eminent Pierre Bourdieu, chair of sociology at the Collège de France, denounced TV as a menace not only to highbrow culture but to democracy itself, the French were stunned. While Bourdieu's ninety-five-page polemic, *Sur la télévision* (Liber), catapulted to the best-seller list this spring, a fiery exchange of name calling, soul searching, and righteous indignation ensued in Paris's intellectual circles.

PIERRE BOURDIEU

Bourdieu himself threw the first punch, accusing a handful of well-known talking heads of "collaborating" with the dumbed-down imperatives of the *Audimat* (TV ratings). Although Bourdieu was clearly referring to the fondness of some intellectuals for the sound bite, the terrible historical resonance was there. He cited a recent sociological study linking the political choices of various French writers during the occupation to the amount of public recognition they enjoyed at the time. The analogy to today's media-saturated society, he argued, was apt. In a style now familiar to readers of his work on the sociology of intellectuals and their struggles over cultural "capital," Bourdieu issued a defense of France's professional scholars against a burgeoning class of telegenic usurpers. "The more a cultural producer is autonomous, rich in specific capital, and exclusively oriented toward the restricted market in which the only customers are his rivals, the more likely he is to resist," he wrote. "Conversely, the more he directs his products to the mass market (as do essayists, writer-journalists, mainstream novelists, for example), the more likely he is to collaborate with external forces—the state, the church, the party, and, now, journalism and television—and submit to their demands."

But collaboration, Bourdieu implied, was still less evil than mindlessness. By its very nature, he declared, television is antithetical to thought, and for those who pander to the pundit circuit, he coined a mortifying epithet: *le fast-thinker.* "Can one think in a hurry?" he demanded. "By giving the mike to thinkers who are supposed to think at an accelerated rate, doesn't television condemn itself to having nothing but fast thinkers?" Even worse, Bourdieu lamented, it's always the same bunch—M. X on Russia, Mme. Y on Algeria. Familiar not only to their audience but to one another, these affable experts turn intellectual debate into a stagy fiction: "The universe of permanent guests is a claustrophobic world that functions according to a logic of permanent self-reinforcement."

Accused of a complicity of egregious proportions, the chattering classes struck back. Prolific essayist and man about town Alain Finkielkraut, singled out for criticism by Bourdieu, was incensed that among the book's named and implied targets were numerous Jews. In his rebuttal, Finkielkraut did Bourdieu's charge of collaboration one better, suggesting that the only historical analogy for *Sur la télévision* was Stalinism. Bourdieu was "not pleading for democratic debate, but for *la pravda sociologique,*"

TV: CORBIS-BETTMANN BOURDIEU: CARLOS FREIRE/RAPHO 1992

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Finkielkraut fumed in the literary monthly *Lire*. "And he's literally furious to see television respond hospitably to ideas he hasn't personally endorsed." In *Le Monde*, Daniel Schneidermann speculated cynically on Bourdieu's motives: "No public utterance is free of the wish to be heard," he mused. "Was the sociologist not moved by a desire to secure himself some press coverage?" In the weekly *Télérama*, Alain Rémond pointed out that Bourdieu's text itself had originated on television, in the form of two speeches he gave at the Collège de France in the spring of 1996 that were recorded and broadcast on a Paris cable station. What are we to make of Bourdieu's wish that intellectuals not appear on television except "under certain conditions"? Rémond wondered. Who, after all, can insist on the conditions Bourdieu himself enjoyed: a lecture at the Collège de France without time constraints, journalists, or adversaries?

These cavils are nonsense, says Didier Eribon, a critic for *Le Nouvel Observateur* and staunch Bourdieu supporter. "With the word 'fast-thinker,' he described an entire phenomenon," says Eribon. "There are two types of intellectuals in France: those who produce scholarly works based on research and the kind anointed by the media, who publish quick surveys with titles like *Was the Twentieth Century Useful?*" The public, he says, knows the real thing when it sees it. *Sur la télévision* has sold 100,000 copies, he points out, despite the fact that Bourdieu has refused all requests for TV and print interviews.

Quietly enjoying the whole debate are the *universitaires*, the largely obscure population of scholars whom Bourdieu commends for dedicating themselves to their research instead of their public image. At the Collège de France, Jacques Bouveresse (the author of *La Demande philosophique*, a cautionary account of how everyone in France these days wants to be a philosopher) applauds his colleague's candor. "Academic philosophy provides a service for other philosophers and writers," he says. "But philosophy on TV? That's something I'm pessimistic about." He is doubtful, however, that *Sur la télévision* will do much to redeem French intellectual life. "Bourdieu overestimates the effect it can have," he says sadly. "He believes that once you've exposed the process people have a new awareness and things change. But the truth is everyone is more or less resigned. They're convinced it's impossible to engage in real debate."

EMILY EAKIN

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UPROOTING THE PAST

ISRAEL'S NEW HIST[illegible] RD LOOK AT THEIR [illegible]

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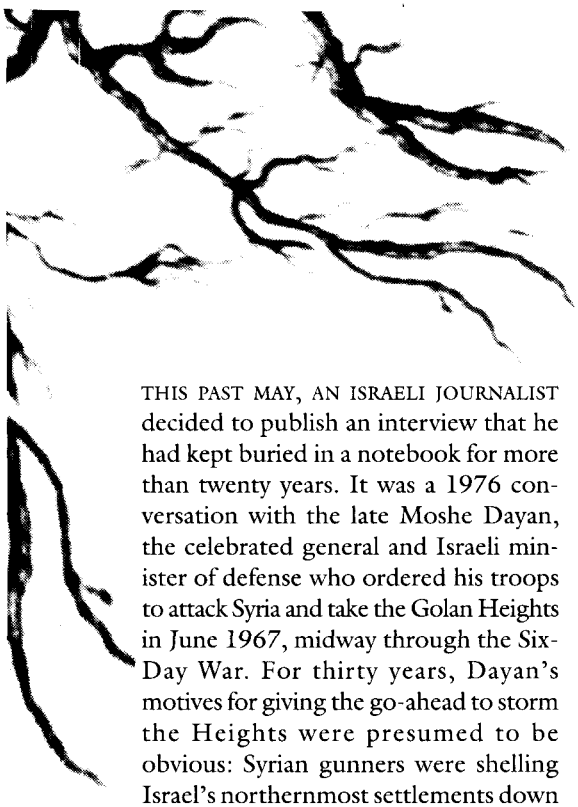

THIS PAST MAY, AN ISRAELI JOURNALIST decided to publish an interview that he had kept buried in a notebook for more than twenty years. It was a 1976 conversation with the late Moshe Dayan, the celebrated general and Israeli minister of defense who ordered his troops to attack Syria and take the Golan Heights in June 1967, midway through the Six-Day War. For thirty years, Dayan's motives for giving the go-ahead to storm the Heights were presumed to be obvious: Syrian gunners were shelling Israel's northernmost settlements down below, and the Golan's strategic high ground was considered invaluable in protecting Israel from its most implacable enemy. In this heretofore unpublished interview, however, Dayan offered a new explanation—Israeli farmers had pressured him to go on the offensive because of the Golan's fertile soil.

To a casual American student of Israeli history, this posthumous confession has all the makings of a bombshell. In Israel, however, such rounds of historical revisionism have become nearly as commonplace as they are controversial. Over the past decade, an increasingly influential group of Israeli historians, sociologists, and journalists have dedicated their careers to shattering the "myths" surrounding the creation of the Jewish state. Like America's revisionist historians—who in the Sixties rewrote the history of the Cold War, recasting Truman and Eisenhower as aggressors who provoked their Soviet counterparts—Israel's New Historians, as they call themselves, are taking a skeptical look at the traditional Zionist narrative. In the process, they are accusing their mentors, the first generation of Israeli scholars, of distorting history to protect the country's image. The New Historians' work is not your typical academic fingerpointing—for Israel is a small, young country whose national narrative resembles a family history. In short, these intergenerational broadsides are of tremendous political importance.

"Until very recently, we did not have real history in this country, we had mythology," says Tom Segev, a journalist and author who believes that the preexisting body of Zionist historical research is so saturated with myths that "New Historians" is the wrong sobriquet for him and his cohorts; they should, he says, be called Israel's first historians.

Not surprisingly, the old guard is fighting back—and with a vengeance. They counter that the New Historians have not discovered anything new, and that, for all of their ambitious claims, their work is based on a facile or misleading use of documents. And just as the New Historians accuse the older generation of exploiting their discipline for the purposes of pro-Israel propaganda, the old historians charge that the New Historians are motivated by political concerns of their own—namely, undermining the Jewish claim to Israel.

"I'm not saying that Zionist history isn't colored by Zionism, but this new history is colored by anti-Zionism," fumes Shabtai Teveth, a historian and author who is in the midst of a multivolume biography of David Ben-Gurion, one of the founding fathers of the Jewish state.

To the first generation of Israeli scholars, Palestine's early Jewish settlers were idealistic pioneers who arrived in pre-state Israel with every intention of living in peace alongside their Arab neighbors and upgrading the quality of life for all of the land's inhabitants. Years later, Zionist leaders worked furiously to help their Jewish brethren escape Nazi-occupied Europe. And when the War of Independence erupted in 1948, the narrative continues, local Palestinian Arabs left their villages not under threats from invading Israeli troops but at the behest of the Arab rulers of surrounding states who assured them they would be able to return to their homes once the Arab armies emerged victorious. As for the war itself, early histories of Zionism characterized the outcome as a major upset: Jewish David defeats Arab Goliath. It was, in short, the stirring portrait of Israel's birth that Leon Uris painted in his best-selling novel *Exodus* (1958)—only this tale was codified in textbooks like *The Book of the Haganah,* a history of Israel's pre-state army edited by a former minister of education, and etched into the consciousness of Israeli schoolchildren. Over the years, such collective memories have played an important role in shaping Israeli policy toward the Palestinians. If, for example, the Palestinians fled voluntarily after the Arab states declared war on Israel, why should Israel feel guilty about its reluctance to repatriate them?

Now, with the emergence of the New Historians, nearly every one of Israel's long-accepted truths is under siege. "We are trying to tell people to unlearn the past," offers Gershon Shafir, an Israeli sociologist who accuses the early Zionist settlers of exploiting local Arab workers. Most significantly, Shafir's fellow revisionists have contended that the Zionist response to the Holocaust was, at best, inadequate and that the 1948 Palestinian exodus, the historical event at the root of Israel's continuing problems with its Arab neighbors, would be more accurately described as an expulsion. The revisionist canon is diverse. But the unifying thread connecting all of these works is clear: The view of Zionism as a heroic movement for Jewish independence is better suited to hagiography than history.

THE SEEDS of the revisionist movement were planted in the early Seventies, when the Jewish nation-building project first started to lose some of its luster. Emboldened by the Israeli victory in the 1967 Six-Day War, religious fundamentalists and other right-wingers began competing with secular Labor Zionists for the legacy of the Zionist movement. At the same time, internal tensions between Jews of North African origin and those of European descent were eroding the utopian vision of Israel as a prejudice-free place of refuge for all Jewry. Soon, changes were afoot in the

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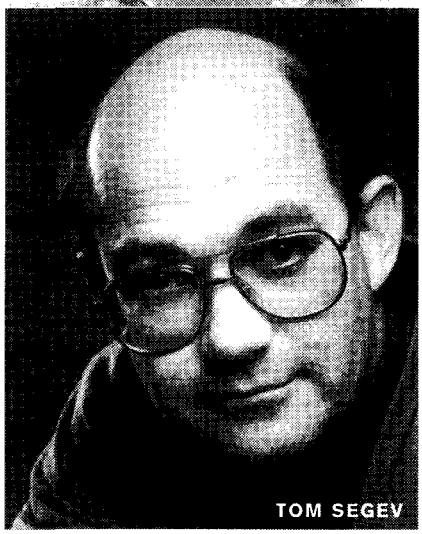
academy. At Tel Aviv University, the sociologist Yonathan Shapiro was writing critically of the leading Labor Zionist party, Mapai, questioning the depth of its commitment to socialist ideology. And at Jerusalem's Hebrew University, Baruch Kimmerling was looking at Zionism within the broad context of European colonialism, undermining the prevailing notion that the Jewish settlement of Palestine was a unique historical event. A small cadre of like-minded "critical sociologists" came together at the University of Haifa, and even brought out their own academic journal for a brief stretch.

But it wasn't until the late Eighties that the revisionist movement acquired critical mass. Benny Morris, the author of a seminal work on the Palestinian refugee crisis, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem: 1947–1949* (Cambridge, 1987) coined the term "New Historians" in a 1988 essay in the American left-wing Jewish magazine *Tikkun*. He attributes the rise of Israeli revisionism to two principal factors. The first is straightforward enough: Under Israel's Archives Law, many key Foreign Ministry documents, as well as a host of other state papers, were not available until the mid-Eighties, after a thirty-year rule had elapsed. But the more compelling explanation is that most of the New Historians were born after the 1948 war and thus grew up in an increasingly self-critical society. The majority of the old historians, by contrast, were firsthand participants in the country's nation-building effort.

"One of the main reasons that they wrote what they did was that for many of them 1948 was the golden moment of their youth," says Morris. "They were all fighting in the hills of Jerusalem, and they weren't going to besmirch that moment." Simply put, the defining experience for the old historians was Israel's triumph in the 1948 War of Independence and the accompanying rebirth of the Jewish nation. The lives of the New Historians were more powerfully shaped by the country's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, as well as the 1982 war in Lebanon, Israel's so-called Vietnam.

The quarrel between these two generations of historians has spilled out of Israel's scholarly journals and academic seminars and into the country's mainstream media. Morris and Segev frequently write for the Israeli press—and so do their critics. In an opinion piece in the daily newspaper *Ha'aretz* in June 1994, the novelist Aharon Megged introduced a new degree of passion and urgency into the debate with his screed, "Israel's Propensity for Self-Destruction." Accusing the New Historians of conspiring to undermine the society's confidence in the justness of the Israeli cause, Megged asked rhetorically: "What is it that moves Israeli scholars to distort and make ugly the Jewish national liberation movement, whose only desire was to

BENNY MORRIS


TOM SEGEV

realize the 2,000-year-old hope to return to Zion, where both individuals and the people would 'together be resurrected,' as the poet Mane put it?"

But for all the high-flown, ideology-steeped rhetoric, there is a significant irony to the debate. The struggle between the "revisionist" historians and the older generation is often portrayed as a narrow political battle between the left (the New Historians) and the right (the old). Yet Israel's earliest leaders were ardent socialists and aggressive opponents of the right-wing Zionist movement led by Vladimir Jabotinsky. When the New Historians argue that the country's founding fathers acted harshly or treacherously in their dealings with Arabs, this does little to trouble Jabotinsky's followers (including many members of Binyamin Netanyahu's current government), who argue that no price is too high for the establishment and continuation of a Jewish majority in Israel. It was Ben-Gurion's Labor Zionists, the forebears of today's Labor Party, who were responsible for the settlement of Palestine and who dominated Israel's political scene until the late Seventies. Accordingly, the New Historians have directed most of their critical attention to the Labor legacy. "I think the intention was to have the Labor movement and all the affiliated groups look back at what they have done and what they are doing now vis-à-vis the Palestinians," says Gershon Shafir, who now teaches at UC-San Diego. "It was felt that a new opening was possible."

OF ALL THE salvos fired at the traditional Zionist narrative, the one that has resonated most forcefully in the Israeli consciousness concerns the Holocaust. The Nazi genocide, in effect, vindicated the claims of Zionist leaders who argued that it was not possible to lead a Jewish life in the Diaspora. And yet Israel has always had a complicated relationship with the Holocaust. Many survivors (including Elie Wiesel) who came to Israel after World War II complained that they were not welcomed with open arms. The psychological explanation for this phenomenon is complex, but there was no doubt a deep divide between the deflated Jews of Europe, the walking wounded who had narrowly escaped this unprecedented instance of persecution, and the empowered Jews of Palestine (and later Israel), who had decided much earlier to live out their lives away from Europe.

Memories of the Holocaust were largely repressed in Israeli society until 1961, when Adolf Eichmann became the first Nazi war criminal to be brought to justice in Israel. While the trial was hailed as a watershed in Jewish history, it wasn't without its critics, including, most famously, a *New Yorker* correspondent by the name of Hannah Arendt. Her dis-

BEN GURION UNIVERSITY (TOP) YORAM LEHMANN (BOTTOM)

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"UNTIL VERY RECENTLY, WE DID NOT HAVE ANY REAL HISTORY IN THIS COUNTRY, WE HAD MYTHOLOGY," SAYS TOM SEGEV.

patches and subsequent 1963 book, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil,* accused Israeli leaders, and Ben-Gurion in particular, of staging an operatic trial that put anti-Semitism throughout history—not just one war criminal—in the dock. Even more controversial was her suggestion that local Jewish councils, as well as Zionist leaders, had abandoned their fellow Jews during the Holocaust. In Arendt's inflammatory words, "This role of the Jewish leaders in the destruction of their own people is undoubtedly the darkest chapter of the whole dark story."

The New Historians have picked up on this theme, blaming the Jewish leadership of pre-state Israel for not doing its part to save European Jewry. The most blistering attack came from Tom Segev, the Israeli journalist who also holds a Ph.D. in history from Boston University. (Many of the New Historians earned their graduate degrees abroad.) In his book, *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust* (Hill and Wang, 1993), an immensely popular—and controversial—best-seller in Israel, Segev provides a broad sketch of the Shoah's impact on Israeli society. But the pages that garnered the most attention—and provoked the most outrage—dealt with the Zionist establishment's alleged indifference toward the Nazi genocide. Segev's argument, in a nutshell, is that the Zionist leaders were much more interested in securing the establishment of the Jewish state than in saving the lives of Europe's Jews.

Segev's main target is none other than the lion of Zionism, Israel's founding father par excellence, David Ben-Gurion. Born in 1886 in Plonsk (then Russian Poland), Ben-Gurion founded his own Zionist youth group at age fourteen. Six years later, he settled in Palestine, where he soon became a pioneer of the Jewish Labor movement and an indefatigable champion of the Jewish struggle for independence. For classical secular Zionists, Ben-Gurion was a modern-day Moses; no single individual embodied the spirit and aspirations of the movement quite as plainly. And to the New Historians, there is no one more representative of Zionists' myopic devotion to their cause. "Ben-Gurion is somebody they like to hate," charges Anita Shapira, a professor of Jewish history at Tel Aviv University and a leading contemporary historian of Labor Zionism. "If they undermine his moral standing, his integrity, his motivation, then they are on their way to undermining the whole idea of Israel."

Much of the blame that Segev allocates to Ben-Gurion is linked to an ill-advised statement that the Zionist leader made in 1938, shortly after the British government announced that it would accept 10,000 Jewish children from Germany and Austria: "Were I to know that all German Jewish children could be rescued by transferring them to England and only half by transfer to Palestine, I would opt for the latter, because our concern is not only the personal interest of these children, but the historic interest of the Jewish people." In addition, Segev recalls an interview he conducted with Ben-Gurion for the Hebrew University student newspaper in 1968. Segev claims that Ben-Gurion, who was then eighty-two, spoke about the failed attempts at rescuing European Jews in an "offhand" tone that was "almost surreal."

Segev also uses the writings of Rabbi Michael Dov-Ber Weissmandel, the founder of a yeshiva in Mount Kisco, New York, to bolster his case. Before emigrating to America in the Fifties, Weissmandel had been involved in clandestine efforts to bribe the Nazis to spare the lives of thousands of Slovakian Jews. One of the principal impediments to these efforts, Weissmandel wrote in a book published by his disciples after his death, was Zionist resistance. He claims to have seen a letter written by a Zionist field-worker in Geneva rejecting a proposal to ask the Allied nations to help underwrite the plan. The rabbi quotes the letter from memory: "[I]t would be foolish and impertinent on our side to ask the nations whose blood is being spilled for permission to send money into the land of their enemies in order to protect our own blood. Because only through [Jewish] blood will the land [Palestine] be ours."

Needless to say, *The Seventh Million* didn't endear Segev to traditional Zionist historians. The most comprehensive

JEWISH REFU[illegible]NE, 1943

UPI/CORBIS-BETTMANN

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DAVID BEN-GURION IS THE MAN THE NEW HISTORIANS "LIKE TO HATE," SAYS ANITA SHAPIRA.

rejoinder to the book came from Shabtai Teveth, who took a break last year from his monumental biography of Ben-Gurion to spin off a 250-page defense of the Zionist leader. *Ben-Gurion and the Holocaust,* as Teveth's book is called, is to *The Seventh Million* what Jacob Robinson's *And the Crooked Shall Be Straight* was to Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem*—that is to say, an attempt at a thorough point-by-point rebuttal. Teveth highlights the constraints that Ben-Gurion faced during World War II, including British restrictions on immigration to Palestine, while acknowledging that Ben-Gurion did see everything within the context of the struggle for Jewish independence. "This was the mark of great leadership: that in a time of darkness, total despair, and utter impotence, Ben-Gurion told his people that from their very helplessness they could draw strength," Teveth wrote. As for Weissmandel, Teveth questions the existence of the letter that the rabbi claimed to have seen and offers his own explanation as to why Weissmandel, who lost his wife and children in the Holocaust, might have lashed out at the Zionists. "He could not understand why God took away his wife and his children, but he couldn't bring himself to raise his fist against God, so he had to turn against man," Teveth says.

For his part, Teveth has been accused by the revisionists of having a penchant for hero worship. It's certainly true that he does not approach Zionist history as an indifferent observer. His cramped office in north Tel Aviv has all of the makings of a shrine to Ben-Gurion, complete with an oversized poster of the charismatic Zionist leader grinning beneath his trademark wisps of white hair and gripping the hand of his small grandson. When the War of Independence first broke out, in April 1948, Teveth, then a cub reporter at *The Philadelphia Inquirer,* immediately enlisted in the Israeli army and boarded an American ship bound for his native shores of Haifa. The captain, however, decided to stop over in Beirut, where the passengers were promptly arrested and thrown in jail as prisoners of war. The American government finally managed to free Teveth and his fellow passengers, but the ship was ordered to return to New York. Teveth finally made it to Israel several months later and was assigned to the army's weekly newspaper. He now believes that the early Zionists may have been naive in thinking they could integrate peacefully into the country, but he is unbending when it comes to the movement's broader intentions. "Zionism saw itself from the outset as a just movement bearing justice and welfare to all concerned," he insists.

Still, for all of his nostalgic sentiments for the Zionist struggle, Teveth is a dogged researcher, and his work is not easily dismissed, even by revisionists. Avishai Margalit, a sociologist at Hebrew University, draws a distinction between Teveth the historian and Teveth the historiographer. While Teveth rarely fails to give an accurate account of the events in question, Margalit explains, the reader should almost systematically draw a different conclusion. "When he tells you how marvelous Ben-Gurion and Dayan were, just discard it, it's ridiculous," says Margalit, "but with the stories, you should do something very different."

IF Teveth fits the profile of the old-school Zionist historian, his chief adversary among the revisionists, Benny Morris, is the quintessential New Historian. Born in 1948 and raised on a left-wing kibbutz, Morris spent several months in Lebanon during the 1982 war, both on assignment for *The Jerusalem Post* and as a soldier in the Israeli army. "It was an unpleasant and immoral war," remarks Morris, who visited a few refugee camps in southern Lebanon during the war, where he interviewed Palestinians who fled their villages in northern Israel in 1948. He was in a mortar unit during the siege of Beirut, an event that he recalls bitterly as "one of the worst things that happened during the war."

Shortly after returning from Lebanon, Morris decided to write a book about the Palmach, the striking force of the Haganah. Most of the official state documents covering the years leading up to the 1948 war were classified, but he did manage to get approval to sniff around the Palmach archives. Within a few months, however, the officials in charge of the archives had a change of heart: They felt that the history of the military unit ought to be written by a former Palmachnik.

But Morris had already seen enough to inspire him to press on. However, the documents that most intrigued him did not pertain to the heroics of the Palmach; they related to the exodus of some 700,000 Palestinians from Israel over the course of the

DAVID BEN-GURION

ARCHIVE PHOTOS

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1948 war. Like most children educated in Israel, Morris had been taught that the Palestinians had abandoned their villages because Arab leaders told them to. But Morris says the documents buried in the Palmach archives offered a starkly different explanation for the exodus: In many cases, Arabs were expelled from their villages by invading Israeli troops led by commanders like Lt. Col. Yitzhak Rabin.

He detailed his findings in *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem: 1947–1949,* a book whose publication coincided with the start of the 1988 Palestinian uprising—or intifada—in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza. Before the intifada (which translates as "an awakening"), Israelis had given little thought to the Palestinian refugee crisis. As skirmishes escalated between Arab youths and Israeli soldiers, however, a growing conviction took hold among Israelis that the time had come to confront the Palestinian question. That meant revisiting the circumstances of the exodus. Bound up in these recondite historical questions is a concrete political issue: Israel's Law of Return, which guarantees every Jew automatic citizenship upon arrival in the country but, to its critics' chagrin, does not apply to Palestinian Arabs who fled Israel over the course of the 1948 war.

For all of Israel's current political turmoil, most of the New Historians and critical sociologists argue that the existence of the Jewish state is now more or less secure, and thus Israeli citizenship should no longer be conferred on the basis of one's religion alone. The Law of Return, they contend, is preventing Israel from becoming a fully pluralistic and democratic society. This view has become known as the post-Zionist perspective, and it holds that whatever its accomplishments and missteps, the state-building process is now over, and the continuation of nationalist measures like the Law of Return is unnecessary, even dangerous. The ideological struggle between the Zionists and post-Zionists lurks in the shadows of Israel's ongoing historical disputes. Zionism's defenders worry that the post-Zionists are out not just to rewrite Israel's past but to alter the course of its future—or, more to the point, strip the country of its Jewish character. "The difference between post-Zionists and Zionists is that the post-Zionists don't attach any importance to

Israel being the state of the Jewish people," says Shapira, whose acclaimed 1992 book, *Land and Power: The Zionist Resort to Force, 1881–1948* (Oxford), surveyed the evolution of Zionism's complicated attitude toward armed struggle. "On the contrary, they think that this is at the heart of the whole problem of our relations with the Palestinians. They'd like to find a way to eliminate the Jewish predominance in this country."

YET THE relationship between post-Zionism and the new historiography is a tricky one. Traditional Zionists argue that the two are, in effect, inseparable inasmuch as the New Historians approach their work through a post-Zionist lens. But some revisionists insist that one can be critical of Zionism from a historical perspective without believing that the essential project of the movement—the establishment of a Jewish state—was misguided. "To be an apologetic Zionist doesn't make you more Zionist than someone who is a critical Zionist," says Margalit, who calls himself a classical Zionist—namely, one who believes that Israel should be an asylum country for all Jews. While Margalit is persuaded by many of the critiques of the early Zionist leadership, his commitment to the movement remains unshaken. He avers: "I think it's an act of honor never to renounce Zionism. It's an act of loyalty not to renounce it but to fight for the meaning of it."

For his part, Morris chafes at the suggestion that he is motivated, or even influenced, by ideological concerns. "I'm not a post-Zionist, I'm a historian," he says indignantly. "I didn't invent the term post-Zionism and I don't use it." While he stops short of denying that historical writing has political implications, he argues that it is his responsibility as a historian to ignore them. "I was aware that people would distort what I was saying," he says, "but a historian can't be held accountable for what he writes or he won't write the truth." An overweening sense of political mission, Morris adds, is precisely what prevented Israeli historians from telling the whole story during the height of the country's propaganda war with its Arab neighbors in the Fifties and Sixties.

Morris complains that these same unreconstructed Zionists still control the Israeli academy and offers his own career as proof. He started looking for a teaching job in 1988, shortly after publishing his first book; it wasn't until the beginning of this year that he managed to get a position at Ben-Gurion University, whose reputation is not on par with either Hebrew or Tel Aviv University. "I was ostracized by Israeli universities," says Morris. "People felt that my work would endanger their own academic reputations. I was saying that Israeli historiography was propaganda, and I was branded subversive."

ARE MORRIS'S fears justified? That depends on whom you ask. Baruch Kimmerling, a sociologist at Hebrew University, answers in the affirmative. "In the past four or five years, an almost coordinated campaign on the scale of a McCarthyistic witch-hunt has been waged against academics in Israel who do not accept the basic ideological premises of mobilized research or who are critical of some of the paradigms of the elder generations," he says. And Ilan Pappe, a post-Zionist professor of political science at Haifa University, attributes his failed attempts to get a post at Hebrew University to this same campaign.

The old-school Zionists' impression of the academic establishment couldn't be more different. The prime minister himself, Binyamin Netanyahu, has blasted Israel's universities for their pro-Palestinian tendencies and has pledged to support the creation of alternative institutions. The premier's own father, a renowned historian of medieval Jewry who is a professor emeritus at Cornell, says he left Israel because his right-of-center perspective prevented his getting tenure at

RACHEL HIRSCH

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any universities there. Some Zionist scholars ascribe the professional difficulties faced by Morris and his colleagues to the shallow nature of their work. "On the whole, the historical knowledge of Benny Morris—not to mention others less scholarly than he—is very limited," says Shapira, who contends that the very term "the New Historians" is a misnomer for a group that has done little more than recycle the arguments presented in anti-Israel communist brochures in the Fifties and Sixties. "They are interested only in diplomatic documents, and from my point of view these are not the most important documents because they reflect one field of historical knowledge."

Perhaps Morris does not always meet his own strict standards of historical objectivity. In his aforementioned essay in *Tikkun*, he speculated that the new historiography "may also in some obscure way serve the purposes of peace and reconciliation between the warring tribes of that land." That said, he is generally seen as a first-rate, even tireless, researcher, and his book on the refugee crisis is, at least on the surface, a straightforward work of positivist history. It was an ambitious undertaking by any measure; Morris sought to use only original Israeli documents (he deemed interviews too unreliable) to explain how and why some 600,000 to 760,000 Palestinian Arabs became refugees between December 1947 and September 1949. Did they flee or were they pushed?

ARAB PRISONERS, 1948

The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem offers no simple answer to this question. The picture that Morris paints varies from town to town, depending on such factors as strategic importance, Israeli commanders, and, of course, timing. He divides the exodus into four waves, with the first, December 1947 to March 1948, representing a largely voluntary, if uncoordinated, flight of upper-class families from cities like Haifa and Jaffa. He concludes that the inhabitants of Nazareth were earmarked for gentle treatment from the start because of the town's importance to the world's Christian community. But in July 1948, Morris writes, some 50,000 to 60,000 Palestinians were expelled from Lydda and Ramle, neighboring Arab villages that lie along the road that connects Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The orders of expulsion, he reveals, were issued by none other than Lt. Col. Yitzhak Rabin, who recognized the threat that the two towns posed to communication lines and Jewish traffic.

The overall conclusion that Morris reaches is that both parties are to blame for the refugee crisis: "The Palestinian refugee problem was born of war, not by design, Jewish or Arab. It was largely a by-product of Arab and Jewish fears and of the protracted, bitter fighting that characterized the first Israeli-Arab war; in smaller part, it was the deliberate creation of Jewish and Arab military commanders and politicians." It's a nuanced

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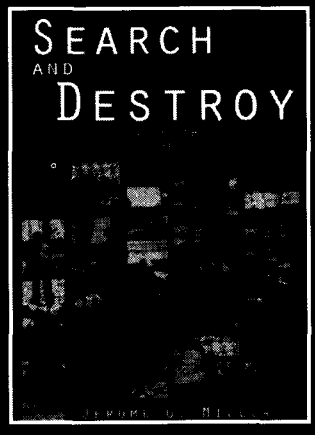

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BENNY MORRIS STRIVES TO ANSWER A SIMPLE QUESTION ABOUT THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES: DID THEY FLEE OR WERE THEY PUSHED?

judgment that hardly seems controversial. But the impassioned reactions to the book and to Morris's scholarship in general—from old-school Zionists, other New Historians, and Arab scholars alike—suggest otherwise. Indeed, they underscore just how charged this debate has become.

"Benny Morris is ferociously anti-Zionist," says Teveth, who accepts that Israel is partially to blame for the refugee problem but argues that Morris's even-handed conclusion is just a disguise for accusing Israel of what we would now call ethnic cleansing. Teveth took on Morris first in a stinging three-part critique in *Ha'aretz*, and later in an essay in *Commentary* magazine, the ideological antithesis of *Tikkun*. In Teveth's view, Morris is unwilling to acknowledge that when Israel expelled Palestinian Arabs, "it did so because they were enemies whose interests lay in abetting the invading Arab armies." Where Morris says he was unable to divine any pattern in the Arab flight, Teveth insists that Morris simply didn't want to admit that the first flight of 75,000 Arabs was ordered by Arab leaders. To buttress his case, Teveth relies on the 1961 testimony of—who else?—Ben-Gurion, who told the Knesset that "we have explicit documents testifying that [the refugees] left Palestine following instructions by the Arab leaders, with the Mufti at their head." Those "explicit documents," Teveth continues, are intelligence reports from the Haganah and its successor, the Israeli Defense Forces. What's more, he notes, Morris himself quotes from them extensively, "though in a highly biased fashion."

But what vexes Teveth most are Morris's attempts to show that "transferring" Arabs from Palestine to neighboring countries was a part of the Zionist plan from the get-go—an argument that, if true, would indeed cast a shadow over the whole Zionist project. Morris pins much of his case on declassified memoranda written by an early Zionist figure, Yosef Weitz, who headed a 1937 committee formed to study the possibility of transfer. "He makes out of Yosef Weitz a kind of Mengele of Zionism," sputters Teveth, who goes on to question Weitz's importance within the Zionist leadership while explaining that the "transfer committee" was disbanded in 1938, after deciding that a population exchange would be impractical.

But "ferociously anti-Zionist" to one Israeli historian is not anti-Zionist enough to another; Morris has endured criticism for being too soft on Zionism from some of his revisionist cohorts, most notably Ilan Pappe. "Given the evidence that he presents," says Pappe, "it's surprising that he does not conclude that there was a master plan for the expulsion of the Palestinians." Moreover, Pappe argues that it is naive, if not disingenuous, for Morris to claim there is no connection between history and ideology. "At least in the Israeli-Palestinian context, the pretension of professional historians of being objective or neutral is, to my mind, ridiculous," remarks Pappe. According to him, the historical documents speak in different ways to different people; call him a postmodern post-Zionist. He believes that Israeli historians should state clearly their political affiliations before presenting their research and even sets an example in this regard, speaking openly about his membership in the Hadash, Israel's communist party.

Pappe's own view of the Palestinian exodus—that it was part of a premeditated master plan—is closer to that of the bulk of Palestinian scholars, including Nur Masalha, an honorary fellow at the Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at the University of Durham, in England. Masalha credits Morris with helping to change the terms of the debate on the Palestinian question, but, like Pappe, he sees a discrepancy between the evidence Morris presents and the conclusions he draws. In a 1995 review of Morris's book

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THE NEW HISTORIANS HAVE FACED STINGING CRITICISM FROM TRADITIONAL ZIONISTS AND PALESTINIAN SCHOLARS ALIKE.

1948 and After: Israel and the Palestinians in the *Journal of Palestine Studies,* Masalha chides Morris for making distinctions between "outright expulsion" and the use of "various military pressures and psychological means" to prompt people to flee. He goes on to fault Morris's "inadequate command of Arabic" and suggests that he "seems hardly aware of the growing body of Palestinian oral history."

RASHID KHALIDI

For the most part, Morris and his cohorts have elected not to draw on the emerging canon of Palestinian scholarship, a body of work that in its impassioned style often recalls the early Israeli lesson books that Morris grew up reading. Rashid Khalidi, a well-known Palestinian scholar who directs the Center for International Studies at the University of Chicago, acknowledges that it is difficult for Palestinians to write objective history at a time when their future as a people is not secure. Nonetheless, he argues that Morris's book on the refugee crisis did little more than put an Israeli imprimatur on what Palestinian scholars have been saying for years. And like Masalha, he faults Morris for taking an Israeli-centric approach to the exodus. "The Palestinians are written out as the subject of this," complains Khalidi, the author of *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern Consciousness* (Columbia, 1997). "He doesn't deign to dignify these people with a voice."

Still, such critiques are mild compared with those Morris has faced from the Zionist establishment. To old-school Zionists like Teveth and Shapira, post-Zionism and the adversarial ethos reflected in the work of the New Historians represent something far more menacing than the evolution of a political and ideological movement. Indeed, they signal a loss of faith in the intrinsic value of the Zionist enterprise and, consequently, nothing short of a crisis for the Jewish state. In their view, the clash between New Historians and old, Zionists and post-Zionists, is symptomatic of a society being torn apart at the seams. It is certainly the case that Israel's recent public debates over how to approach its past have been nothing short of bitter: Witness the flap over Netanyahu's decision not to release a government-commissioned report confirming that Israeli soldiers had killed forty-nine Egyptian prisoners of war back in 1956. Or consider the recent controversy over a Jerusalem high school teacher's refusal to take his students to Masada, the ancient Jewish city whose inhabitants committed suicide rather than fall into the hands of the Romans.

But, paradoxically, there is another way to interpret this internal combustion: One hundred years after the birth of political Zionism and fifty years after the declaration of the Jewish state, Israel is becoming a normal nation, one that can conduct a freewheeling, no-holds-barred debate about its past. "Part of what it means to be a Zionist is to inhabit a free country and to be able to write history without apologetics," observes Margalit. "In my view, we are now a free people and should be free to write history in an open and critical way."

Jonathan Mahler is the managing editor of *The Forward* newspaper in New York. His article "Howard's End: Why a Leading Jewish Studies Scholar Gave Up His Academic Career" appeared in the March 1997 *LF*.

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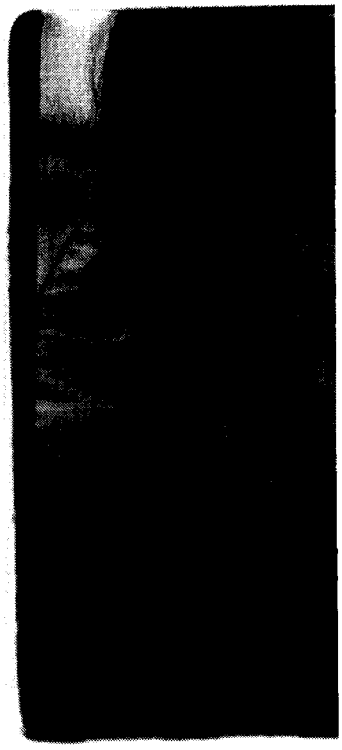

MELISSA COOPERMAN

ONE AFTERNOON THIS PAST APRIL, A group of more than fifty students and faculty at the New School for Social Research filed into a room on the second floor of the graduate faculty building for an open meeting with New School president Jonathan Fanton. For months, the students had been clamoring for a drastic revision of the New School's curriculum and minority hiring policies, and the mood in the room was tense. Before Fanton arrived, the group prepared the atmosphere by lighting candles, burning incense, and draping an Indian tapestry over a portrait of former New School professor Ernst Wolff (a "dead white male"). They also read aloud a statement declaring their "solidarity...against this University's discriminatory employment practices and its abhorrence of genuine democracy."

When Fanton arrived, the protesters erupted in anger. As he attempted to defend the university's record on diversity, the president was interrupted by cries of "shame" and "liar." One student warned, "There's going to be a detonation!" After two hours of heated exchange, several protesters presented Fanton with a long list of demands and grimly announced a hunger strike—a measure they said was necessary until the university agreed to change its "racist" ways. When Fanton tried to leave the room, the protesters swarmed around him, detaining him for half an hour until he agreed to a second meeting. Mustafa Emirbayer, a New School sociologist who watched the drama unfold, recalls a scene of "jaw-dropping surrealism" as students blockaded the door and jeered the president. "My own knees were rubbery," he says. "It was as if the king had been temporarily deposed."

Thus began a springtime of insurrection at the New School. Six days after Fanton was detained, two more administrators—Executive Vice President Joseph Porrino and Provost Judith Walzer—were held hostage for five hours by the same group of insurgents. By the end of April, the facade of the graduate faculty building was blanketed with signs bearing slogans like RACIST, SEXIST, ANTI-GAY, NEW SCHOOL POLITICS GO AWAY! Inside, members of the fifty-strong coalition of disgruntled students and professors that came to be known as the Mobilization gathered within the "New University in Exile," where alternative classes were held, a People's Reading List was posted, and, for nearly three weeks, candles burned for a dozen hunger strikers.

IN THE increasingly odd annals of the Nineties culture wars, none of these events may seem particularly surprising. In recent years, student activists have launched hunger strikes for diversity on campuses ranging from Stanford to Columbia, UC-Irvine to Cornell. But the New School uprising was unusual in degree if not in kind: It was a sustained siege that for several months poisoned relations among professors and students and turned the graduate faculty building into a virtual war zone. And it was taking place at a proudly progressive institution, where John Dewey and W.E.B. Du Bois once taught, and where earlier in this century scholars fleeing fascist Europe had organized their own "University in Exile."

Throughout the semester, students in the Mobilization resorted to extreme—and sometimes ugly—tactics. In February several of its supporters demonstrated against a New School exhibition of Holocaust photographs that took place during Black History Month. And one afternoon in late April, the protesters blocked the entrance to the graduate faculty building during a collective "die-in," chanting slogans as their colleagues stepped awkwardly around them. Even in more placid moments, a committed vanguard of several dozen activists occupied the main lobby, passing out jargon-laden leaflets protesting the New School's "police-state measures" and accusing

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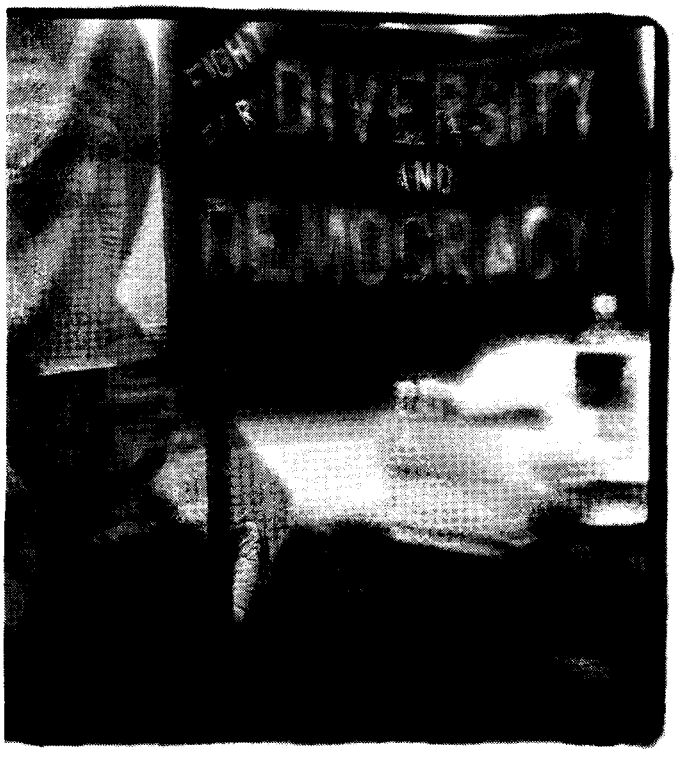

numerous left-wing faculty members of racism. James Miller, the Foucault biographer and director of the New School's Committee on Liberal Studies, describes the lobby tableau as "Monty Python does PC." But he also found the drawing of battle lines painfully ironic. "Most of the faculty are veteran activists and people on the left," he says. "I once organized a demonstration to demand that my own college create a black studies program. So it's just plain weird to be called a racist and reactionary. In the real world, you know, we're not gonna be confused with Jesse Helms."

FOR MEMBERS of the Mobilization, however, the behavior of faculty and administrators this spring smacks of hypocrisy not irony. "The New School has been involved in a certain kind of institutional deception for decades," says M. Jacqui Alexander, a feisty and charismatic visiting professor in the gender studies program who was in many ways the catalyst for the violent eruptions at the university this spring. Although the Mobilization's agenda eventually encompassed all aspects of university life—from wages for maintenance workers to student representation—its members initially came together over Alexander's unsuccessful bid for tenure. ("The university structures as constituted could not secure a permanent position for me," she explains with characteristic aplomb.) A lengthy February 2 memorandum that Alexander identifies as the Mobilization's founding document elaborated the ways in which "entrenched white institutional power" perpetuates "racism" and "other forms of inequality" at the university. (Alexander is of Caribbean descent.) Taking issue with President Fanton's assertion that Alexander would not serve as the "litmus test of the university's commitment to diversity," the memo countered indignantly, "Professor Alexander *is* the litmus test." This was a view shared by the hunger strikers who listed Alexander's immediate tenuring as an urgent priority. After she was accused of acting purely out of self-interest, Alexander removed her tenure bid from the list of demands and then joined the fast herself.

Sprawled across the floor of the lobby, Mobilization hunger strikers and supporters recounted to anyone who would listen the history of the New School's broken promises on diversity. In 1990 the university had announced its intention to become "the most diverse private university of excellence in the country." Seven years later, its critics point out, there is still only one tenured African-American scholar (Terry Williams, a sociologist) on the entire graduate faculty. President Fanton and other administrators acknowledge this, though they point out that the percentage of full-time faculty of color in all divisions of the university (19 percent) is higher than the national average (12 percent), as are the overall numbers of women. But Alexander and others in the Mobilization are not impressed. As proof of gender bias, they cite political science professor Adamantia Pollis, who won a sex-discrimination suit against the university in 1996 on the grounds that she was forced to retire at age seventy while several male contemporaries on the faculty had been allowed to continue teaching. (The New School has appealed the verdict.) Just as egregious, argues Alexander, the university's "faculty of color," unlike white professors, are relegated to part-time, marginal status through a "revolving door" policy of short-term appointments.

Many deans and faculty who do not sympathize with the Mobilization admit that the university has been slow to implement affirmative action in the graduate division. One reason, they say, is that there are no separate guidelines for affirmative-action hires. In the past, minority candidates championed by individual departments have failed to win job offers

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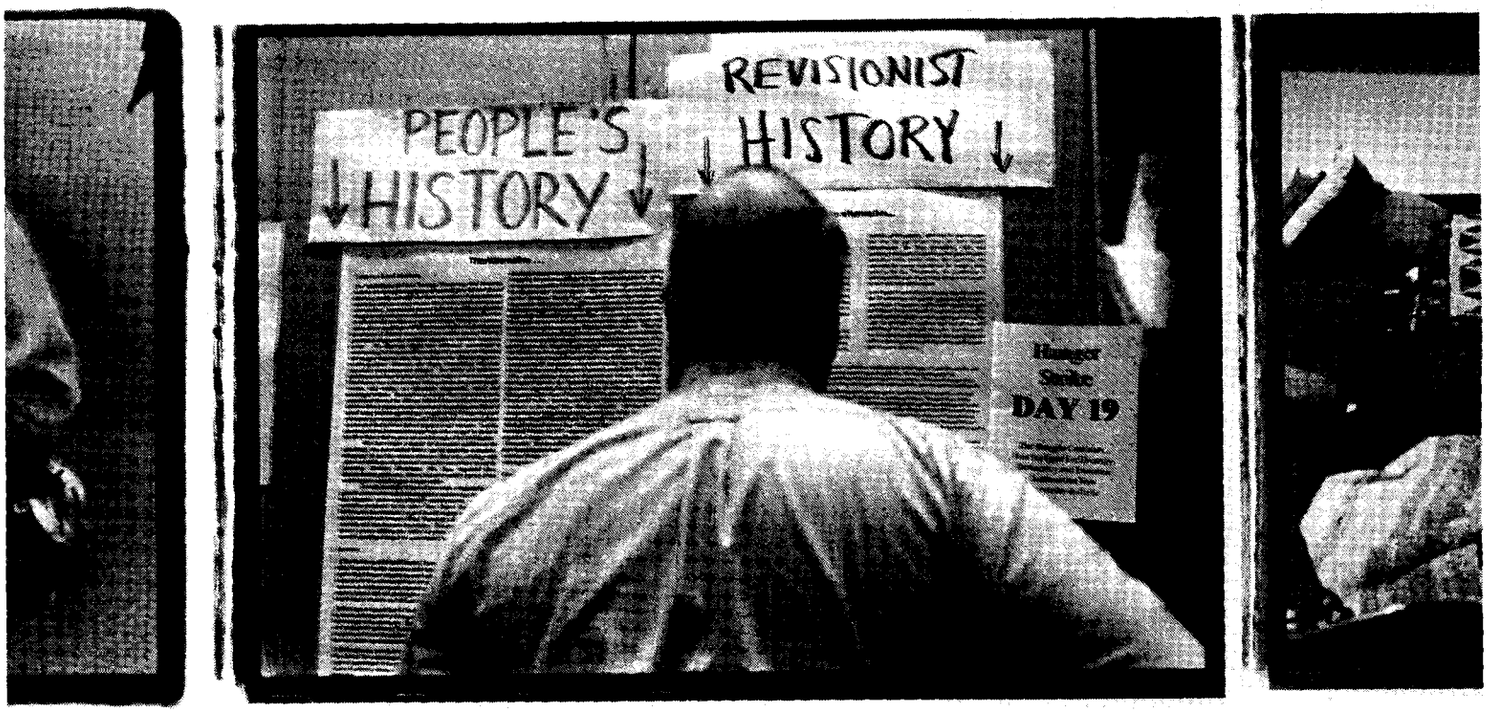

MELISSA COOPERMAN

because they didn't meet the university's tenure criteria: one book published and reviewed and proof of significant progress on a second. "We're not going to make mediocre appointments, be they black or white," says Judith Friedlander, dean of the graduate faculty.

Although some funds for minority hires have been available since 1991, departments have been reluctant to draw upon them. The recent loss of several treasured—and internationally renowned—scholars, including Eric Hobsbawm (who retired) and Ira Katznelson and Charles Tilly (both of whom are now at Columbia), has apparently left a number of departments fearful that restricting new searches solely to minority candidates might limit their ability to maintain both standards of excellence and a range of expertise. In fact, money for all appointments is tight: The New School receives no state funding and has virtually no endowment.

Nevertheless, this winter the university appeared determined to stop dragging its feet on diversity. In March, Fanton's office unveiled a plan to bring five scholars of color to the graduate faculty in the next three years. It was an ambitious goal, but it seemed late in coming, and, more disturbing to members of the Mobilization, it did not include the immediate result they wanted: tenure for Alexander.

In flyers and memos, the Mobilization described Alexander as a "world-renowned feminist scholar of color." At numerous events, students spoke of how "inspirational" she was, how she "represents a different kind of learning," and how she "changed their lives." In the classroom, says Professor Emirbayer, who followed the Mobilization closely this spring and plans to write an ethnography of the movement, Alexander stressed that education is "about choosing to live a certain way marked by honor and integrity and answering back when those things are challenged."

Yet Emirbayer also understands those who take a more jaundiced view of Alexander. More than one Mobilization critic says that what developed around her resembled "a cult of personality"—a cult that she was perfectly willing to exploit by allowing herself to be an issue in the hunger strike and a "litmus test" of the university's commitment to diversity. Displays of adulation from her students were not unusual: A December e-mail from Erich Dewald, for instance, urged New School students to nominate Alexander for the Distinguished University Teaching Award. "Submit a 2 page summary of how Jacqui rules," he advised. "You don't even need to have taken a class with her. Just tell them she rocks your world!!!!"

Critics note that since earning her Ph.D. from Tufts in 1986, Alexander has published no books of her own—though she has penned several articles and co-edited two volumes of essays. Mobilization members counter that her work focuses on "marginalized" subjects not taken seriously by journals and publishing houses. But in fact, her scholarly concerns—evident in articles with titles like "Erotic Autonomy as a Politics of Decolonization: An Anatomy of Feminist and State Practice in the Bahamas Tourist Economy" and "Not Just (Any) *Body* Can Be a Citizen: The Politics of Law, Sexuality and Post-Coloniality in Trinidad and Tobago and the Bahamas"—are standard fare in cultural studies. "Erotic Autonomy," an exploration of "heteropatriarchy" in the Bahamas, is awash in trendy rhetoric: "The paradoxical counterpart of erasure in the consolidation of hegemonic heterosexuality is spectacularization. State managers relied heavily on biblical testimony in order to fix this specter, using reiteration and almost incessant invocation to God and Sodom." After independently reviewing her curriculum vitae this spring, three departments in the graduate division—political science, sociology, and anthropology—each voted against recommending Alexander for tenure.

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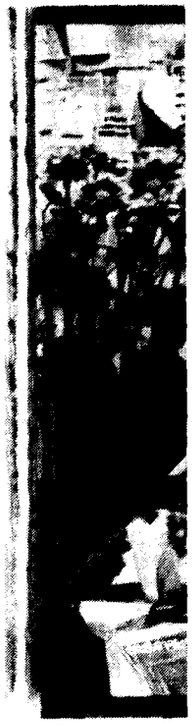
TO STUDENTS IN THE MOBILIZATION, JACQUI ALEXANDER'S TENURE BID WAS "THE LITMUS TEST" OF THE UNIVERSITY'S COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY.



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IN THE Mobilization's view, the battle for Alexander's tenuring was closely linked to the larger hope of forging an alternative to the New School's allegedly Eurocentric curriculum and faculty. "Traditions of decolonization, anti-sexism, anti-racism, gay and lesbian liberation, transnational capitalist critique and the like...have been systematically delegitimized, marginalized and 'minoritized,'" explained the Mobilization's memo of February 2. To what degree "capitalist critique" is marginalized at the New School is open to question—one might get a different assessment from economists at the University of Chicago. It is also worth noting the more than two hundred courses exploring race, gender, and other cultures offered each semester. Still, though the university has always welcomed Marxist scholars, it has never been particularly receptive to postcolonialism or identity politics—or even student activism for that matter. Indeed, some of the school's most famous left-wing professors—including Eric Hobsbawm—were discomfited by much of the student radicalism of the Sixties.

Soon after releasing their memo, several Mobilization members found what they believed was further evidence of the School's Eurocentric bias: the Holocaust photography exhibit set up in the main lobby of the graduate faculty building. "The University needed to understand that they had done something wrong," explains Bahiyyih Maroon, a student activist who led a demonstration against the exhibit that quickly devolved into an emotional confrontation between student protesters and elderly Jewish women. It was "disrespectful," Maroon explained later, for the New School to stage a Holocaust exhibit in February in place of activities commemorating Black History Month. In fact, the New School did honor Black History Month in several ways, including hosting a discussion with Harvard's Kwame Anthony Appiah, a lecture by visiting professor Emmanuel Eze, and a reading of correspondence between Marcus Garvey and William Pickens. But these events failed to deter the protesters.

The centerpiece of the Mobilization's campaign to remake the school's curriculum was a six-page document posted on a wall in the main lobby entitled "Rethinking Europe." Conceived before the hunger strike began, it proved almost as powerful a magnet for devotion and outrage at the New School as Alexander herself. In May 1996 several graduate faculty members—Rayna Rapp, an anthropologist who heads the gender studies program, Vicky Hattam, then chair of the political science department, and Steve Caton, also an anthropologist—approached Dean Friedlander with a proposal to expand the New School's curriculum and bring several scholars of color to the graduate faculty. Friedlander seemed receptive and in September 1996 circulated "Rethinking Europe" to various senior professors for their consideration. Written in consultation with Jacqui Alexander and several other faculty members, the document called for recruiting minority scholars to study the "trans-Atlantic" (the geographic area spanning Africa, Europe, the Caribbean, and the Americas). In the spirit of Paul Gilroy's influential book *The Black Atlantic* (Verso, 1993), the minority scholars would examine "the ways in which information, peoples, commodities, and cultural forms flow back and forth across borders," with a particular focus on "power relations."

But when the proposal was discussed at a September 24 faculty meeting, several professors dissented from it. Feminist philosopher Nancy Fraser argued that, while expanding the curriculum was a worthy goal, the project outlined in the document was oddly parochial. "It was an inappropriately narrow proposal," Fraser says, "both in its thematic focus on the trans-Atlantic and in its methodology, which I can only describe as Sokalist—as though someone had tried to parody the trendiest, most obfuscatory jargon in critical theory and make

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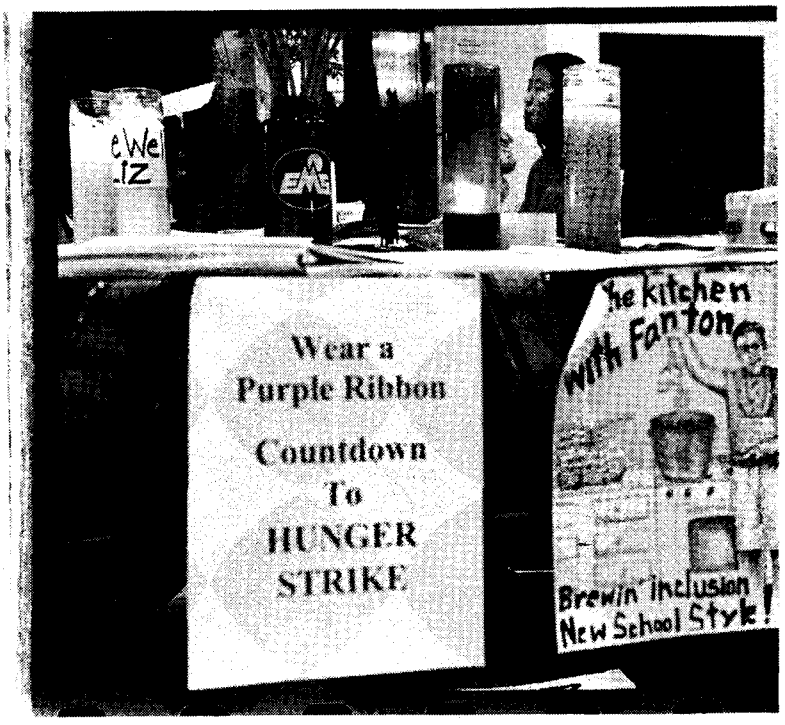

MELISSA COOPERMAN

this the basis for hiring people. You would get such a narrow pool of applicants, and, because of the New School's limited funds, our ability to hire people of color in, say, psychology or political science would be left unaddressed." Richard J. Bernstein, chair of the philosophy department, felt similarly, expressing his objections in a strongly worded five-page memo that eventually made the rounds of the university. What troubled Bernstein most was the conflation of an affirmative-action plan with a proposal for curricular reform. "There is a constant slippage in this document from 'diversity' to 'scholars of color' without any critical reflection," he complained, pointing out that "there are many 'white' persons...whose research and interests focus on the issues discussed in this document."

There was another reason that Nancy Fraser and others at the New School rejected "Rethinking Europe." The proposal, says Fraser, was "a thinly disguised ploy to write a job description and stack a search for one particular person." That person was Jacqui Alexander, a co-author of the document who was conspicuously praised in its pages as "the only scholar [at the New School] whose research engages" the issues under discussion. "I didn't know Jacqui Alexander's work very well at the time," Fraser admits, but she believed that any decision about hiring Alexander should be made after a thorough review of her dossier by an individual department, not the special ad hoc committee envisioned in the proposal.

When Fraser voiced her objections to the plan, she didn't know she was participating in what "Rethinking Europe's" authors deemed the "collective murder" of a campaign for justice. In late January, apparently unaware that she had blood on her hands, Fraser stepped out of a seminar room at the University of Wisconsin at Madison where she was giving a guest lecture, and was handed a copy of an e-mail that had just been sent to a progressive student organization in Madison. "On Friday, January 31," it began,

> Nancy Fraser, a faculty member at the New School in NYC will be giving a talk at the University of Wisconsin at Madison on international feminism. Fraser is being used by her administration to tout the New School's "diversity."... However, Fraser was instrumental in defeating a proposal to hire more faculty of color and make the New School less Eurocentric. The obvious racism and hypocrisy of this woman...needs to be immediately exposed and addressed.... If you live in Madison...please act on this.

Word of the inflammatory e-mail message quickly spread to faculty members and acquaintances of Fraser in Madison and New York. Flooded by a barrage of requests for substantiation of the charges, the Cambridge-based Center for Campus Organizing, which had posted the message, issued Fraser an apology. It turned out that a lone employee who had been in touch with activists at the New School (and who has since resigned) had acted without authorization. At the New School, members of the graduate faculty circulated a memo denouncing the attack on Fraser: "We strongly reject the idea that legitimate disagreement over curriculum or personnel should be construed as opposition to diversity or as racism."

But on February 25, the Coalition of Concerned Faculty, Students and Staff, which would soon merge with the Mobilization, struck back with a scathing memo of its own. The university's defense of Fraser, the memo opined, "is a brilliant example of the swift ways in which white power is deployed to insulate itself from critique and to protect white interests." As for Fraser herself (whom Cornel West has termed "one of the most creative social philosophers of her generation"), her criticism of "Rethinking Europe" revealed that she was merely a loyal servant of a regime of

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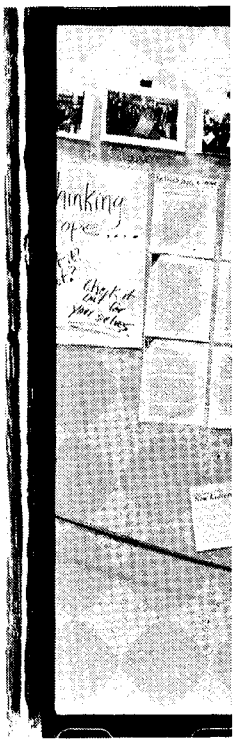
"white supremacy." "Let's be clear," the memo explained, "Nancy Fraser is being called to account for her complicity in this institution's discriminatory structures.... [S]he must be held accountable for her position of power. And all those in power should be similarly called to account for their policies and practices."

THROUGHOUT the spring, the phrase "called to account" surfaced again and again. Mobilization activists used it to denote those individuals they judged "complicit" with the university's official stance which, in practice, seemed to be anyone who disagreed with the Mobilization's tactics or demands. During the nineteen-day fast, hunger strikers huddled in blankets, some holding aloft signs declaring, WHITE FACULTY, WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO? THE HUNGER STRIKE IMPLICATES YOU! On other occasions, individual white professors were singled out for criticism. At an open forum in April, for example, David Plotke, a professor of political science, was berated by Amit Rai, a professor in the undergraduate division, for opposing the Mobilization's tactics. On the afternoon of the die-in, Plotke had clashed with those who were blocking the entrance to the graduate faculty building. "What bothered me about the open forum was the personal nature of it," he says. "As that evening developed, it was clear there was no room for real political discussion—either you agreed with the ideas of this group or you weren't opposed to racism."

Alexander justifies "calling out" individuals by saying that "institutions don't simply operate by themselves—they operate through people." The faculty's opposition to "Rethinking Europe," she says, revealed "the profound fear...of people of color taking over the institution at all levels."

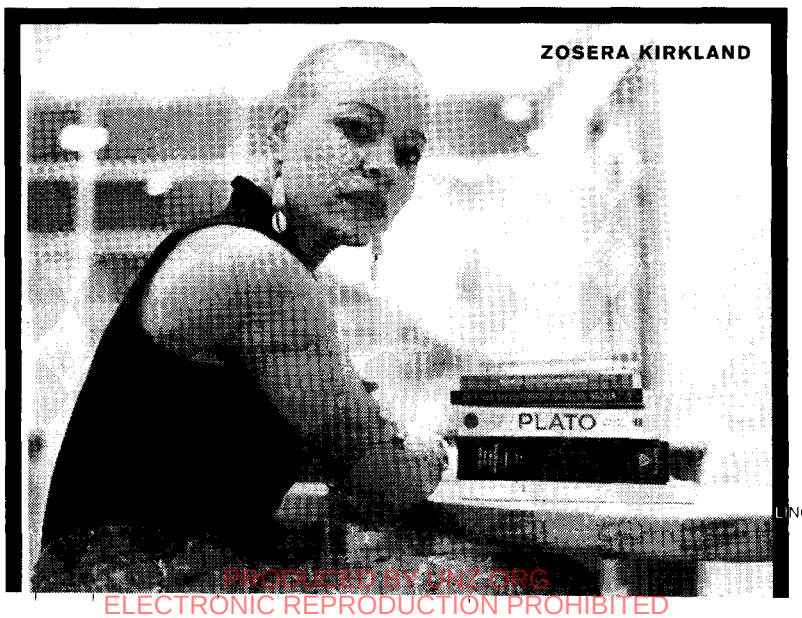
Behind the anger on both sides, the fallout from "Rethinking Europe" exposed a fundamental difference of opinion over what curricular diversity actually entails. To the Mobilization, it means incorporating "new knowledges" into the curriculum: not just more courses on non-European subjects, or even more faculty of color, but whole new fields of study that focus on the experiences of different identity groups (black studies, Latino studies, queer theory), with the implicit assumption that one's epistemology and one's identity are closely, if not causally, related. For faculty members like Fraser and Bernstein, however, who insist they are open to bringing new fields and methodologies to the New School, this kind of identity-based epistemology restricts the acquisition of knowledge to individuals who meet preestablished requirements for gender, skin color, and sexual orientation. This is certainly the way some members of the Mobilization conceive of "new knowledge": Welcome to the "world of anti-queer ideas," one of its flyers mockingly proclaimed, where "faculty members who have same-sex lovers...think who they fuck doesn't influence what they write, how they teach, the way they live."

In its literature, the Mobilization repeatedly stressed the "lived experiences" of marginalized groups—African Americans, Latinos, gays and lesbians, and women. And when Camille Atkinson, a graduate student in philosophy, took the floor at an open forum to explain that she had become increasingly troubled by the Mobilization's strident rhetoric, in particular its casual use of phrases like "white supremacy" and "racism," a Mobilization member in the audience responded, "It's not all a matter of interpretation: Some people have lived experiences." As a February memo from the protesters succinctly put it: "For us, racism is not a matter of opinion."



Over the course of the semester, the Mobilization repeatedly equated the right to judgment with skin color. In response to an anonymous flyer posted in the graduate faculty building denouncing the attacks on Nancy Fraser, for example, a group within the Mobilization called END (Education Not Domination) wrote: "As a white woman...[Fraser] should be aware that part of being involved in struggles for justice sometimes entails being called out by people of color, who may have certain kinds of epistemic privilege to recognize racist behaviors and racist tendencies that white people sometimes overlook." What if Fraser and others at the New School thought the attacks on her were simply baseless? Too bad, the memo implied, the whites in power lacked the "epistemic privilege" to determine this.

Ironically, in her most recent book, *Justice Interruptus* (Routledge, 1997), Fraser herself grapples with the question of how to sort out demands for recognition by different ethnic and racial groups. Straining for a middle ground between those who celebrate cultural difference and those who fear its balkanizing consequences, Fraser argues for the development of a "*critical* theory of recognition, one that identifies and defends only those versions of cultural politics of difference that can be coherently combined with the politics of equality." It's a laudable ideal yet one that leaves the most difficult question unresolved: Who determines which movements fit the stated criteria? Fraser states unequivocally that the Mobilization at the



ZOSERA KIRKLAND

HRONN AXELSDOTTIR

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POLITICAL DEBATE WAS IMPOSSIBLE, CONCLUDED DAVID PLOTKE. "EITHER YOU AGREED WITH THE IDEAS OF THIS GROUP OR YOU WEREN'T OPPOSED TO RACISM."

New School "was not a struggle for social justice," but clearly its members thought that's what it was.

More ironic still is that, despite the group's identity-based rhetoric and practice, many of the Mobilization's own members happen to be white, while many of its critics are not. At an open forum on May 6, several students from Latin America spoke out against the Mobilization, as did Zosera Kirkland, an African-American graduate student in political science. Initially, Kirkland was a member of the Mobilization, but by mid-April she was convinced that "if you didn't get with the new orthodoxy, there really wasn't a place for you" within its ranks. When Kirkland tried to raise some of her objections—to "preaching about white supremacy to the administration, which I thought was unconstructive and inappropriate," for example—she grew frustrated that no one in the Mobilization wanted to listen. In late April, she helped write a statement titled "An Alternative." Signed by more than forty graduate students and faculty members, including Richard Bernstein, Nancy Fraser, and James Miller, the document attempted to forge an alternative to both the Mobilization's and the administration's views on diversity. On the one hand, it criticized the New School as "procedurally inept" and "complacent" in its approach to affirmative action and expressed "unwavering" support for hiring five scholars of color at the graduate division (though Alexander was not mentioned) and for a "critical reappraisal" of the curriculum. On the other hand, the document argued against the conflation of affirmative action and curricular diversity and pointedly criticized the Mobilization for a political style that amounted to "a confusing, invidious and politically unsophisticated morass of ad hominem attacks, alienating tactics, and moral grandstanding."

Soon after they were posted around the New School, copies of "An Alternative" were torn down. Replacing them was a response from the Mobilization titled "Factionalism Is No Alternative," which denounced the opposition's "arrogant attempt to weaken a popular struggle"—as though a plot had been hatched to derail the Cuban Revolution. "The current counter-mobilization," a Mobilization e-mail of the same period explained, "has remained true to the mandate of hegemonic white power in its efforts to undermine and condemn the legitimate struggles of marginalized people for justice." Singled out for special criticism were the "few people of color" who had "fallen victim to" the administration's white-power agenda. The not-so-subtle implication was that Kirkland and other people of color who opposed the Mobilization were Uncle Toms. As Ursula Wolfe-Rocca, a student at the New School's undergraduate college, explained later, "Part of the critique is of 'whiteness,' where power coalesces in certain ways.... Clearly there will be some people of color who share in that 'whiteness.'"

Kirkland was taken aback by the hostile treatment that "An Alternative" received at the university and by the allegations of racial betrayal directed her way. "Intellectually and politically, I can substantiate what I did, but emotionally I feel distraught," she says. Kirkland adds that she still identifies with Mobilization members such as Leslie Hill, an African-American political scientist who was deeply alienated by her experiences at the New School. Brought to the university under its Diamond Post-Doctoral Fellowship Program, which was implemented in 1991 to recruit minority scholars, Hill explains that she was tucked into a small office on the fourth floor of the graduate faculty (though her department is on the second floor), rarely spoken to by colleagues, and burdened with a much heavier teaching load than had been implied in the original description of her fellowship. In a scathing assessment of the program submitted to the university in April, Hill called on the New

MELISSA COOPERMAN

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School to go beyond mere "window dressing" and "cultivate a context in which [scholars of color] can develop and *thrive*." Despite her sympathy with such demands, Kirkland says that she would rather take a stance with people who are "critical and rational" but who may not share her politics than with undemocratic movements that do.

Daniel Delaney, an African-American graduate student in political science and a Mobilization member, speaks from the other side. His goal is to push the New School on affirmative action, which, despite some available funds has not, he feels, been a priority in the past. "There are a lot of people at the New School who'd be the first ones to sign a petition saying diversity is a good thing," Delaney observes. "But when it gets to zero-sum decisions, they make arguments [for other departmental needs] that are completely sound but that mean diversity is not the first priority."

By the end of the semester, opportunities for substantive dialogue on such issues had virtually disappeared. The May 6 open forum, designed to spark conversation between people with conflicting views, quickly deteriorated into bedlam. Andrew Arato, a New School sociologist, bluntly informed the students that the "halcyon days" were over, implying that the administration had been too lenient with them and provoking a Mobilization activist to denounce the "slimy white liberals" in her midst. A Peruvian student taunted the Mobilization by asking, "What color am I?" and declared, "This place is not to be turned into a circus—it's absolutely infantile." No sooner had he said this then a student from the Mobilization seized the microphone and screamed "Fuck you!" at Arato. Others denounced the signatories of "An Alternative" as "traitors" and "submissive women." "What I've seen in this room tonight has reminded me of why I left the Mobilization," Kirkland exclaimed. "You are out of control and a disgrace."

JUDITH FRIEDLANDER

But perhaps the climactic moment at the forum occurred when James Miller read a prepared statement harshly critical of Jacqui Alexander: "When a hunger strike was begun, in part on her behalf, Professor Alexander did not do the decent thing immediately and remove herself as an issue. I have witnessed hunger strikes before; in the 1960s, I met Cesar Chavez, a great activist of genuine spirituality. Jacqui Alexander, to put it mildly, is no Cesar Chavez." Nor was the Mobilization, in his view, blameless for embracing Alexander's tenure campaign.

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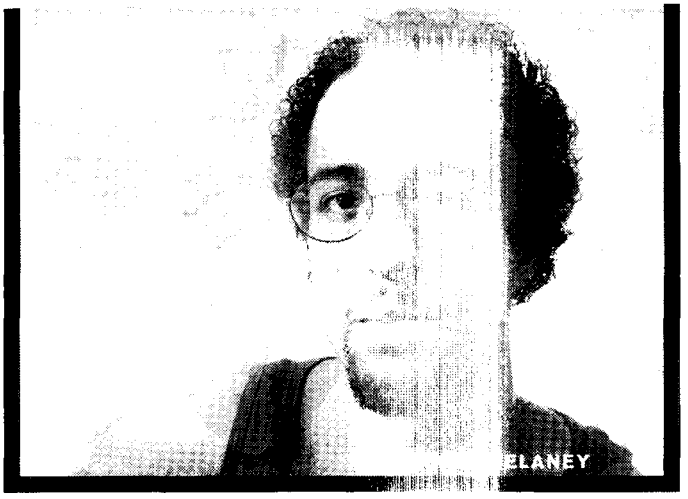

"Unfortunately," Miller said, "by using attitudes toward Jacqui Alexander as a litmus test of this faculty's alleged racism, the Mobilization has tied itself to a record of academic publication that is indefensibly weak."

Miller was immediately denounced as a "racist" and then, as the meeting adjourned, drawn into a tense, face-to-face standoff with Alexander herself. "What authorizes you to speak?" she demanded. Miller responded tersely: "I've read your work."

For many Mobilization activists, the public attack on Alexander—by a white faculty member, no less—was a final outrage. At a cathartic May 12 mock graduation ceremony, which took place just after Alexander taught her last class at the University in Exile, students cried, hugged, banged spirit drums, and denounced the racism of Alexander's critics. Several students gave an oral history of the struggle, and one, reflecting on the imminent loss of Alexander, confessed that the major le[illegible] had learned from the events of the spring was "I can't trust white people."

JACQUI Alexander failed to win her tenure battle at the New School this spring. (In June, she became a Guggenheim Latin American and Caribbean fellow for a project on memory and spiritualism in nineteenth-century Trinidad.) But what about the Mobilization's other demands? Beyond the call for diversity, many of the planks in the Mobilization's platform—enhanced student representation in university decision making, an increase in financial aid, higher pay and benefits for part-time faculty, improved working conditions for the security and maintenance staff—suggest a sincere attempt to hold the university to its stated ideals. The students have already won representation on the university's search committee for minority scholars. And even some of the Mobilization's fiercest critics, such as James Miller, believe the group's actions will probably push the university to implement affirmative-action initiatives more quickly.

Ultimately, though, the New School will be hard-pressed to satisfy its critics in the Mobilization because much of what these critics abhor about the university—the fact, for instance, that its mostly white faculty and students do not "reflect the demographic reality of New York City"—is rooted in broader social and educational inequities that will not easily change. The Mobilization's failure to recognize this points to a disturbing trend in student politics: the tendency to focus

HRONN AXELSDOTTIR

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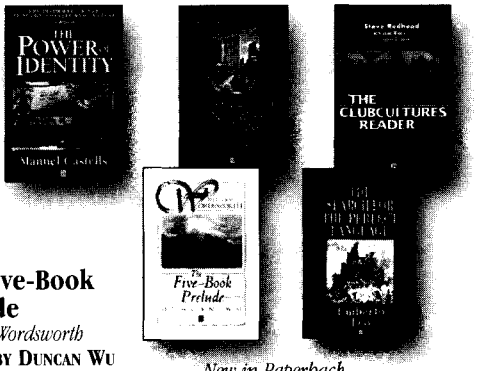

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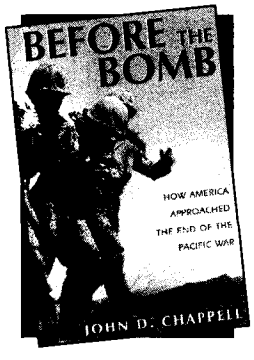
on what's happening on campus to the exclusion of the more egregious injustices committed outside its walls.

Only from such a myopic perspective can the New School be seen as the "white supremacist" cauldron of bigotry that its critics allege it is. Such hyperbolic language begs the question of how the white supremacy of liberal institutions like the New School differs from, say, the politics of David Duke. At the May 6 open forum, a student from Latin America strongly objected to the insinuation that the New School was "authoritarian"—perhaps because this student has seen the real thing at home. Some New School faculty members, recalling their own student days, experienced a certain déjà vu watching the Mobilization movement emerge. "I'm old enough to have seen versions of this before," says David Plotke. "It was at the tail end of the New Left and its relationship to Third World radicalism and domestic black militancy. People would say, 'This is it,' and if you didn't identify, you had no grounds for speaking." Like others, Plotke expects the turbulence to die down. "If the New School were as racist and intransigent as the students claim, nothing would change. But there's actually quite a lot of flexibility and openness." He remains receptive to identity politics, he hastens to add, just not to "hypermoralizing based on authoritarian claims."

THE MOBILIZATION'S RHETORIC LEFT UNCLEAR HOW THE "WHITE SUPREMACY" OF LIBERAL INSTITUTIONS LIKE THE NEW SCHOOL DIFFERED FROM THE POLITICS OF, SAY, DAVID DUKE.

Such hypermoralizing contains its own irony. At the May 6 open forum, a student elicited howls of derision for expressing ambivalence about affirmative action. Perhaps the Mobilization would like to see the New School turn into a utopian island where people with ambivalent or dissenting views do not exist. This, of course, is not the vision of a diverse community where differences are allowed to flourish, but the vision of an artificial, homogenous community where they are effaced.

Eyal Press, who studied political science at the New School for two years, has written frequently for *The Nation* and other publications. His article "Unforgiven: The Director of the Cambodian Genocide Program Rekindles Cold War Animosities" appeared in the April/May 1997 *LF*.



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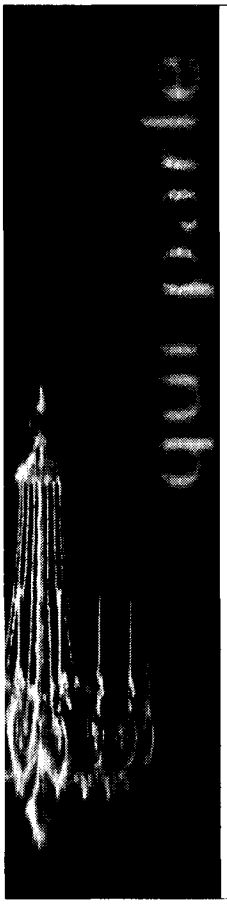

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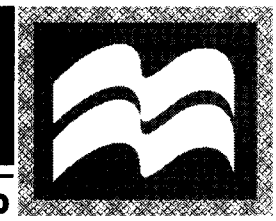

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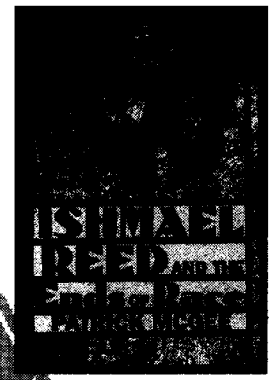

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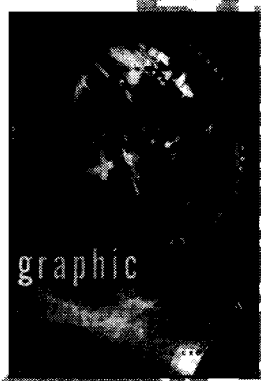

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STEAL THIS PROGRAM

RICHARD STALLMAN'S CAMPAIGN TO LIBERATE SOFTWARE

Richard Stallman doesn't do Windows. Instead, the maverick computer scientist created his own operating system—and he wants to share it with you. Stallman, one of the hackers who made the MIT artificial intelligence lab famous in the Sixties and Seventies, has dedicated his computing career to a seemingly quixotic mission: making software free.

Well, almost. At software trade shows, Stallman can often be found exchanging his wares for cash. True, in the sea of a glitzy, high-tech promotional displays, the booth for Stallman's Free Software Foundation (FSF) looks more like a Cambridge yard sale—a white plastic table stacked with manuals and books, T-shirts dangling over the edge. But like the Lotus booth across the way, the

JAY REED

BY **EMILY BENEDEK**

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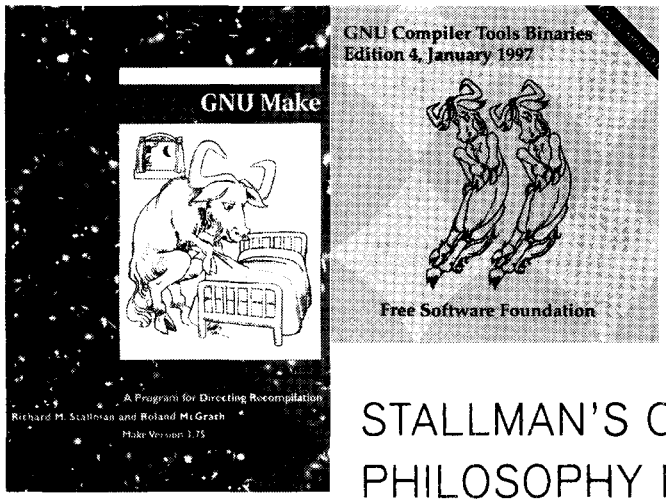
piles of CD-ROMs have price tags: For individuals, the price for a Stallman disc is sixty dollars.

So what's the deal? "I *develop* free software," explains Stallman, a pale, Tolstoyan character with a mass of black hair and a long beard. "I do not necessarily distribute it for free. Free software is a matter of freedom, not price. Think of free speech, not free beer."

What this means is you can take one of Stallman's programs, scour its source code, figure out how it works, and change



the code to better meet your needs. You can copy it and share it with friends, even sell it if you like. In a National Public Radio-like spirit, Stallman believes that those who can shell out sixty bucks for the CD-ROM should do so, and those who can't—well, he'd like them to have a chance to use the software, too. So far, with the aid of numerous benefactors, Stallman has been able to set up and maintain a small army of full-time programmers. And thousands of volunteers have joined his crusade via the Internet.

Stallman's quirky philosophy is, to put it mildly, not the way the computer industry does business. Companies like Microsoft sell proprietary software: You can use it, but you certainly don't have access to the code, and you can't tinker with its insides. And if you copy it and share it with friends—just hope that Bill Gates's lawyers aren't peering over your shoulder.

For the renegade Stallman, this difference is not a mere question of property law; it's a full-fledged moral issue. "I don't have the right to stop you from sharing with a friend," he says, "just in the hope that I'll make more money by stopping you. That's evil." The notion really gets Stallman worked up: "If there were a Satan," he continues, "Satan would be going around trying to tempt you to promise not to share with your neighbor."

Stallman's stand against corporate computer culture has not gone unnoticed: He has been touted as "one of the greatest programmers alive" by *HotWired* magazine and was named a MacArthur Foundation Fellow in 1992. Of course, for most of the folks out in Silicon Valley, Stallman's share-and-share-alike mentality simply does not compute. Fumes Nathan Myhrvold, Microsoft's chief technical officer: "Richard has this quaint notion that software should be free. I say quaint because he doesn't think hardware should be free. Well, why not? The notion that software doesn't deserve as much protection as a Mies van der Rohe or some Herman Miller chair...goddamn it! If someone creates an interesting piece of software that someone sits in front of all day, I think he should at least be able to charge as much for it as the fucking chair he's sitting on."

STALLMAN'S QUIRKY PHILOSOPHY IS, TO PUT IT MILDLY, NOT THE WAY THE COMPUTER INDUSTRY DOES BUSINESS.

It's easy to snipe at Stallman's arguments. For one thing, his egalitarian impulses are clearly those of a member of the programming elite: He believes all computer users ought to be equal, but it seems that when he talks about these users he has only the most serious computer aficionados in mind—the type of folks who dream in UNIX code. Yet ironically, Stallman's hacker nostalgia has begun to look to some like forward thinking. His key argument—that electronic information is destined to be widely and cheaply copied—is one that even Microsoft and Lotus must now grapple with, particularly in this age of Internet downloads. After all, how can you make money from products that can be so easily bootlegged? As Bernie Greenberg, a Boston programmer and former Stallman colleague, puts it, "Stallman understands that we're leaving the age of a barter-based economy—where you exchange value X for something of an equal value—for an economy where information is of value. And there's no cost to copy information. So, the whole paradigm of 'you give me your wife, I'll give you my horse' has to be reexamined from the top down."

ALTHOUGH Stallman's hacker principles may strike some as off-the-wall, they are a natural outgrowth of the heady atmosphere of MIT's artificial intelligence lab in the Sixties and Seventies. Stallman became a part of that pioneering group in 1971, while still an undergraduate at Harvard. Even as he was earning a bachelor's in physics, he spent his nights at MIT, working on operating-system development and programming in computer languages like Lisp.

Stallman not only loved the intellectual activity but also felt at home in the community of programmers who worked together, shared information, and forbade the use of passwords and security systems. Among their many credos, according to Steven Levy's classic book, *Hackers,* were: "Information Should Be Free," "Access to Computers Should be Unlimited," and "Mistrust Authority." The astonishing successes of the artificial intelligence lab, however, also ensured its doom. By 1983, most of the hackers had been lured away by private companies. Only Stallman, one of the most gifted, refused to leave the place he referred to as "home." ("I was heartbroken about it," he recalls. "What I loved most in all the world was gone.") While his friends were off launching software start-ups, Stallman continued to work for what he believed in—equal access to software programming code.

Stallman continued at MIT as a staff programmer until 1984, when he resigned out of concern that the university might dictate how his software was

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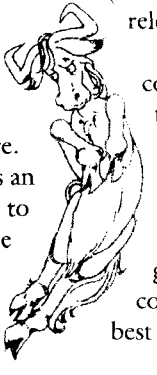
distributed. MIT let him keep his old office, though, and a year later Stallman launched the FSF. Its motto: "Stamp out software hoarding!"

With the advent of the Internet, Stallman was almost able to re-create those idyllic days at the artificial intelligence lab. "We created a new hacker community," he says, "not geographically localized, but a community that essentially everyone is welcome to join if they're capable." Now, people from all over the world write, test, and modify new tools and utilities; the pool of collaborators ranges from academics to armchair enthusiasts. E-mail lists devoted to FSF programs collect complaints from users; each list is read by a "maintainer" charged with fixing these bugs—largely by rustling up volunteers.

Stallman's first big success was the creation of EMACS, a flexible text editor that allows programmers to easily enter and streamline computer code. EMACS soon became the software developer's equivalent of a Swiss Army knife—a basic tool kit you couldn't do without. Of course, it wasn't perfect. Through the Internet, EMACS enthusiasts began contributing improvements to the source code. The result of this collective computing: Over the past ten years, EMACS has blossomed into a large and varied system that's used for everything from reading e-mail to keeping a calendar. In a nod to its seemingly endless uses, the EMACS logo is an overflowing kitchen sink. Stallman estimates that thousands of programmers have tweaked the original EMACS code; 160 of the largest contributors receive acknowledgment in the most recent manual.

Stallman's vision, of course, reached far beyond EMACS. He proceeded with plans to write an entire operating system—the collection of basic programs that organizes standard computer functions like file storage. After laying this foundation, Stallman and his colleagues would then create application programs, with the ultimate goal of allowing people to run their computers entirely with free software. In what some companies viewed as an aggressive move, Stallman decided to model his operating system on the popular proprietary system UNIX—because, he announced in an on-line manifesto, "compatibility makes it easy for UNIX users to switch" to free software. (In this spirit, Stallman cheekily christened his project GNU, for "GNU's Not UNIX!") For several years, the FSF programming community worked non-stop on GNU. By 1992 all but one part of the operating system had been assembled; what was missing was the "kernel"—the code linking the parts together. Fortunately, help came from the University of Helsinki's Linus Torvalds, who released his own free kernel, called Linux. The FSF quickly made Linux compatible with GNU, and Stallman's dream was effectively realized: Computer users no longer had to purchase *any* proprietary software to get their machines up and running. (Ever the perfectionist, Stallman will release his own kernel this fall.)

RICHARD STALLMAN



Today, Stallman's software empire continues to expand. GNU software tools are now used in such far-flung places as Wall Street trading floors, universities, and semiconductor factories. The GNU compiler, which distills programming languages like C++ into raw machine code, is considered by many to be the best on the market, particularly because it can be used on a variety of different systems. Stallman single-handedly wrote the compiler, which has since been updated and enhanced by thousands of others.

Professor Gerald Sussman, of MIT's electrical engineering department, who hired Stallman as a staff programmer in the Seventies, describes Stallman's devotion as "a certain kind of sainthood." But Stallman sees his achievements in more earthly terms. "We've shown that the free software movement can deliver a broad spectrum of good quality software," he says. "We have delivered what people said a decade ago would be impossible without a specific business structure behind it."

Now that hundreds of thousands of people make use of free software, what's next? A web browser, for one. Stallman also plans to develop word processing software. It's a tantalizing notion, one that might bring Stallman's ideas more directly into the mainstream. Instead of waiting the years it takes for Microsoft to release (and charge for) a new update of its popular Word program, users of Stallman's software could e-mail suggestions directly to the FSF Web site. Scientists could modify the program to deal with complex mathematical nota-

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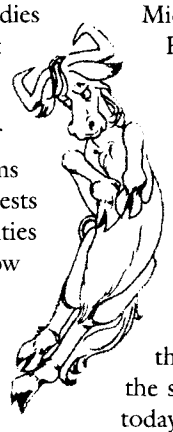
tions, while humanists might help develop the ultimate poststructuralist thesaurus. These specialized versions would each be available for downloading on the Internet. All that you'd be missing would be the shrink wrap and the styrofoam.

STALLMAN maintains that not only is free software good for society, but it is also more reliable than proprietary software. After all, thousands of programmers think better than one (or even a hundred). Recent academic studies bear him out. Computer scientist Barton P. Miller and his colleagues at the University of Wisconsin tested the utilities of seven commercial UNIX systems as well as GNU in 1995. The tests involved subjecting various utilities to random input streams to see how often they crashed or got hung up. The researchers found that the commercial UNIX utilities had a failure rate that ranged from 15 percent to a whopping 43 percent. In contrast, the failure rate for GNU was only 6 percent. Miller concluded that "the reliability of the basic utilities from GNU...was noticeably better than those of the commercial systems."



Microsoft's Myhrvold denies that free software is more reliable. Tellingly, however, Linux-based GNU systems have been adopted by hundreds of companies, such as hospitals, for whom reliability is crucial. The Roger Maris Cancer Center in Fargo, North Dakota, uses free software to track patients' medical histories, coordinate drug therapies, and gather data on patient demographics. Stockbrokers at Merrill Lynch share information on an in-house computer network running free software. Even NASA has become a free-software convert: The agency uses Linux-based GNU as the foundation for a new supercomputer that tracks the trajectories of space "junk," such as dead satellites.

But just as free software seems to be hitting its stride, the FSF has been forced to lay off staff. Whereas the group once paid fifteen full-time employees, it now has seven. Hewlett Packard, which gave grants of $100,000 in 1989 and $75,000 in 1990 cut back on giving during the recession, and never resumed it. Stallman says he was happy to pocket a total of $50,000 for the FSF during a recent trip to Japan, not to mention an additional $8,000 for himself. (Most of the FSF's funds, Stallman reports, come from small donations, seminars, and payment for CD-ROMs.) Despite these occasional difficulties, Stallman appears unfazed. "We're here to say," he says confidently.

Although Stallman envisions himself as a galactic star battler confronting the great money-making, freedom-stealing forces of the world, it may be that the two sides of this battle can coexist. Says Microsoft's Myhrvold, "Long before Richard started this, there was free software, and long after Richard is gone, there will be free software—free in his meaning. Richard Stallman can be the Pied Piper of free software and if the world's software designers decide to become the world's impoverished artists—then fine. Great. I think it's unlikely, and my prediction is that ten years from now it'll be about the same hunk of the market that it is today, which is about the same as it was ten years ago. Which is to say, it's there, it's vital, it's important to some people, but it's not some tidal wave that's about to crush the rest of the business. It's a footnote."

Myhrvold may be right. Then again, the Internet—the fastest growing area of the computer market—has in some ways mimicked Stallman's vision. Stanton McCandlish, program director of the Electronic Frontier Foundation, says, "The free-software model has been instrumental in the development of the Internet." Because the first Net browsers (like Mosaic) were created at universities and given away for free, it is well-nigh impossible to sell one these days. Microsoft's Internet Explorer, for example, may be downloaded for free on the Web; you only buy it if you want a full manual. (Of course, no matter how much you pay, you'll never get Microsoft's source code.)

With software so easy to download, companies may be forced to generate revenue from support services rather than from the sale of diskettes. In fact, at least two companies have made millions by providing customer support for businesses that run Stallman's free software: Cygnus Solutions, of Sunnyvale, California, and Ada Core Technologies, in New York City. Stallman fully supports such ventures. He says he's "not against people making a buck"—as long as his source code remains open to all.

AS FOR the various schemes companies have come up with to protect source code, Stallman sees them as woefully shortsighted. In his view, a software program and a chair just aren't the same thing: It's a terrible mistake to lump together the concepts of physical and intellectual property. "Our intuitions about physical property come from the fact that a given physical object can only be in one place," he explains. "So for example, you don't want your car to be stolen because, if it were stolen, you couldn't drive it. But if someone snuck up to your car with a car copier when you weren't there, and plugged the copier into the car and out the other side of the copier, another car started to expand and eventually it was full sized and he disconnected the car copier and got into his new car and drove away and the next day you came out and your car was there just the same as it had ever been, you wouldn't feel that your car had been stolen, because you'd still have it."

Stallman may be a great kind of car salesman of the information age. But Microsoft's Myhrvold gives the car metaphor a different spin. The computer revolution, he argues, resembles the rise of the automobile in one crucial respect: The less a user needs to know about the machinery, the more popular it becomes.

"If you had a car in the year 1900," he says, "you were an enthusiast and you went out there and you cranked it and you changed your own tires and there weren't any roads and you carried your own gas and it was a big deal. It wasn't an efficient means of mass transportation. The very thing that made computing popular was moving away from the notion of everyone being a hacker."

Stallman, of course, bristles at the idea of deciding what the public does or doesn't want. "To say that all those *other people* don't want to know what's inside a program mystifies software," he declares. "It's saying that if you're not one of the priests of software then we're sure you won't understand. That's just not the right way to treat people."

Emily Benedek is the author of *Beyond the Four Corners of the World: A Navajo Woman's Journey* (Knopf, 1996) and *The Wind Won't Know Me: A History of the Navajo-Hopi Land Dispute* (Vintage, 1993).

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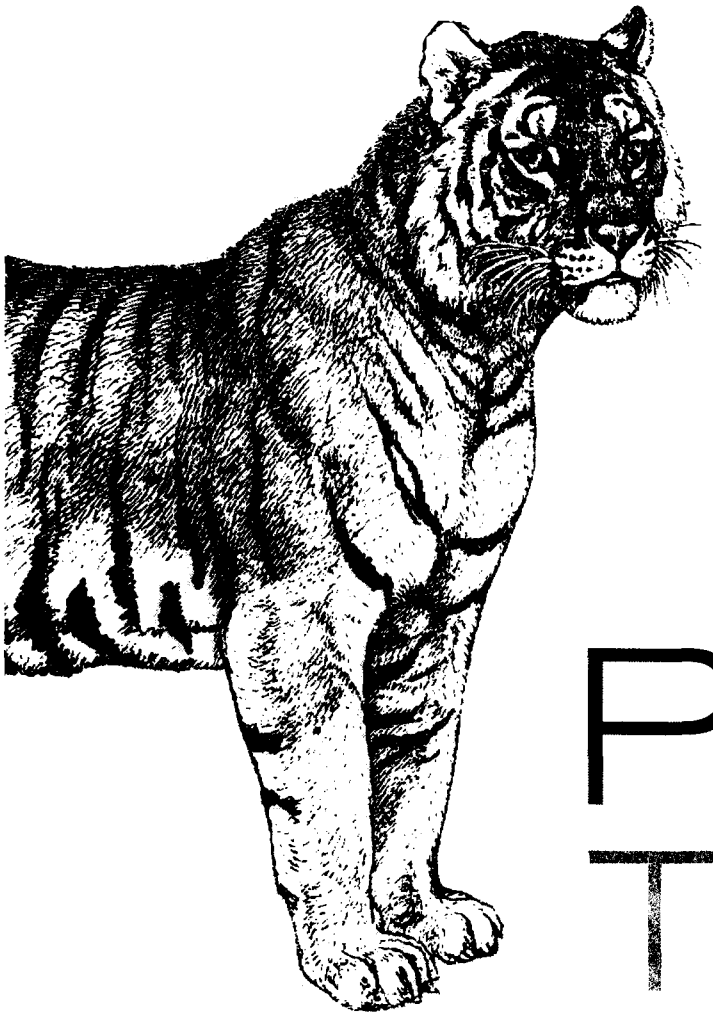

PAPER TIGERS

A SOCIOLOGIST FOLLOWS CULTURAL STUDIES INTO THE WILDERNESS

It can be an unsettling experience for a sociologist to browse a university bookstore these days. It's easy enough to find the women's studies or gender studies section, African-American studies or cultural studies, but not so easy to locate sociology. This is especially unnerving when each of the other sections is full of books that look a lot like what sociology is supposed to be. Perhaps this is a victory, proof of what journalist Richard Rovere wrote two generations ago: "Those of us who have been educated in the twentieth century habitually think in sociological terms, whether or not we have had any training in sociology." But somehow it does not feel like a victory. Something is missing.

BY **MICHAEL SCHUDSON**

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As the body of work called "cultural studies" has grown, the sociology of culture seems to have been elbowed aside.

Cultural studies refuses to be defined or to define itself. Still, some of its features can be discerned. It is something like the extension of literary studies to subjects outside a conventional canon—including science fiction, pornography, rock music, MTV, television generally, popular culture at large. It tends to embrace an anthropological understanding of culture as a whole way of life rather than as a set of privileged aesthetic objects. But if this new discipline sees culture as the universe of social practices, it also redefines social practices as an ensemble of texts, all susceptible to interpretation or deconstruction. Cultural studies seems to promise a sociologically enriched analysis—that is, one that locates cultural objects in relation to the social context in which people produce them and use them. But too often, the result is a sociologically impoverished view of politics and social action. Even more disturbingly, cultural studies shows signs of becoming an insulated and self-confirming field of study. Its most cherished texts—including the one that this essay will examine, Donna Haraway's "Teddy Bear Patriarchy"—are rarely exposed to careful criticism from the outside.

If cultural studies tends to be shy about defining its boundaries, it is often bold in proclaiming its politics. No conservatives need apply. "Cultural studies," writes a leading proponent, Lawrence Grossberg, "may have been (and I would hope still is) opposed to capitalism, its structures of inequality and exploitation...." Since cultural studies arose as a rebellion within established university departments, and since it has often found a home base in politically contested programs, like women's studies, it is not surprisingly characterized by forms of address that testify to shared political principles. Because many scholars who engage in cultural studies are self-proclaimed advocates for women, gays and lesbians, or people of color in higher education, it is easy to see why the fashioning of a distinctive intellectual vision becomes identified with political virtue. But even though political like-mindedness is a familiar and valuable basis for human solidarity, it is a dubious grounding for a whole field of study.

In contemporary sociology and many other social sciences, by contrast, it is taken for granted that conservatives, liberals, and Marxists can and should coexist (though perhaps not too many conservatives and not too many Marxists). In cultural studies, for all its fierce internal debates, there seems to be an unwritten loyalty oath to uphold the trinity of class, race, and gender as the three fundamental dimensions on which difference is present in human experience. Moreover, on the American scene, class regularly drops out of view. Actual work in cultural studies typically focuses on race, gender, and sexual preference. Not only does class recede, but so do other major social bases of discrimination, conflict, and differential power. That the sociologist James Davison Hunter could write a book called *Culture Wars* (Basic, 1991), in which he argues that the fundamental divisions in American life today fall along religious lines, would not make sense or attract much interest in cultural studies.

CULTURAL STUDIES SHOWS SIGNS OF BECOMING AN INSULATED AND SELF-CONFIRMING FIELD OF STUDY.

Whatever the shortcomings of class, race, and gender as a way to discuss the basic dimensions of domination in contemporary societies, these terms certainly have a sociological ring. Equally sociological is the view that the privileged texts of literary or art historical study should be forced to rub shoulders with rock lyrics, science fiction, talk radio, nursery rhymes, and appellate court opinions. Quintessentially sociological is the widespread notion that apparently "natural" categories are in fact socially constructed. Indeed, the whole cultural studies enterprise, as the British sociologist David Chaney suggests, might well be regarded as a subdivision of the sociology of knowledge, which has long taught that "traditions institutionalize ideologies and privilege."

WHY THEN do I believe cultural studies is more in need of sociology than the other way around? One significant problem is that the move from the sociology of culture to cultural studies often involves a slippage from a view that emphasizes the *social* construction of reality to a view that examines the *cultural* or *symbolic* construction of reality, as if this were a process that largely took place outside the social world.

The analytical distinction between the social and the cultural is not always easy to keep straight, but it seems to me fundamental. It goes like this: The "social" is people interacting, and the "cultural" refers to the perceptual frames, symbolic structures, and narrative conventions governing how they do so. For instance, "murder" is a cultural label that refers to one person's taking another person's life without legal warrant. "Murder is wrong" is a cultural injunction inscribed in religious and legal texts and available as cognitive schema in people's heads. It is discourse, revisable and contestable. On the other hand, a given act of killing may or may not fit the legal and moral category "murder," but killing takes place regardless. It is social rather than cultural, behavior rather than consciousness. It makes a living person a dead one. While discourse affects the fate of the perpetrator (first- or second-degree murder? premeditated or not? mitigating or aggravating circumstances? justifiable homicide?), no words and no social constructions resuscitate the victim. Of course, we experience the world through culture. Different societies, and people differently situated in a single society, may see death, or aging, or kinship in very different ways. But no person and no society can escape addressing death, aging, and kinship.

Now, there are several cultural studies traditions, and my criticism is not applicable to all. One tradition grows out of the British effort to write about the relationship between culture and society in a way that keeps ever present the "lived experience" of human beings as they make use of a common stock of symbols and images, religious values, moral outlooks, and received attitudes toward the body, nature, work, and play. Richard Hoggart, for example, showed the complex ways in which working-class Britons drew meaning from pulp litera-

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ture. And E.P. Thompson explained how the most politically active British workers of the early nineteenth century were able to condemn the capitalist order because of their long-standing belief in the "Englishman's birthright." While these writers, who did much of their best work in the Fifties and Sixties, took pride in their socialist political commitments, their intellectual orientation and methodological precepts were not essentially foreign to conventional sociology. Of course, followers of this tradition do not wish to distinguish between the "social" and the "cultural"; they insist strenuously that it is dangerous and misleading to draw such distinctions. According to Raymond Williams, the cultural, linguistic, and symbolic are "indissoluble elements of the material social process itself." The old distinction between "base" and "superstructure," they argue, has to be jettisoned. Although this seems to me a risky blurring of concepts, it works well enough in British cultural studies, which has as strong an identification with sociology as with literary studies and where a doggedly empiricist style of work keeps the study of culture anchored in "lived social experience."

But in the United States, where cultural studies has borrowed from French more than British intellectual culture, a different tradition has grown. Here, a notion of "lived experience" figures only marginally; the primary concern has been to rethink the nature of the literary text itself. One of the messages of this multistranded line of work has been to demonstrate that each human "subject" is created by linguistic formations that exist prior to the individual's consciousness. No knowledge can be unattached to prevailing ideologies, and if a particular intellectual act is not directly subversive, it must by definition be involved in reinforcing the existing relations of power.

What follows from this is important: If knowledge (and culture) arise in a ready-made discursive setting, all knowledge is necessarily in the service of power—whether anyone intends it to be or not. After all, knowledge is inevitably knowledge "for." This is the common kernel of cultural studies and the sociology of knowledge. But if this insight becomes the end, rather than the opening, of inquiry, then trouble begins. "Knowledge for" is also "knowledge of," to adapt a distinction made by the anthropologist Clifford Geertz. This does not presume that "science" and other human representations must be accurate recording devices of a real world. But nor should we assume that knowledge is *only* ideology or only the projection of the "positionality" of the observer onto some object in the world. Neither the one extreme (that the object itself dictates how it will be known and represented) nor the other (that the object does not exist for human knowledge except as humans project themselves onto it) is defensible. Nor is either extreme position very interesting. The first denies human agency; the second denies the world. Both deny the problem—which is to comprehend the relation between

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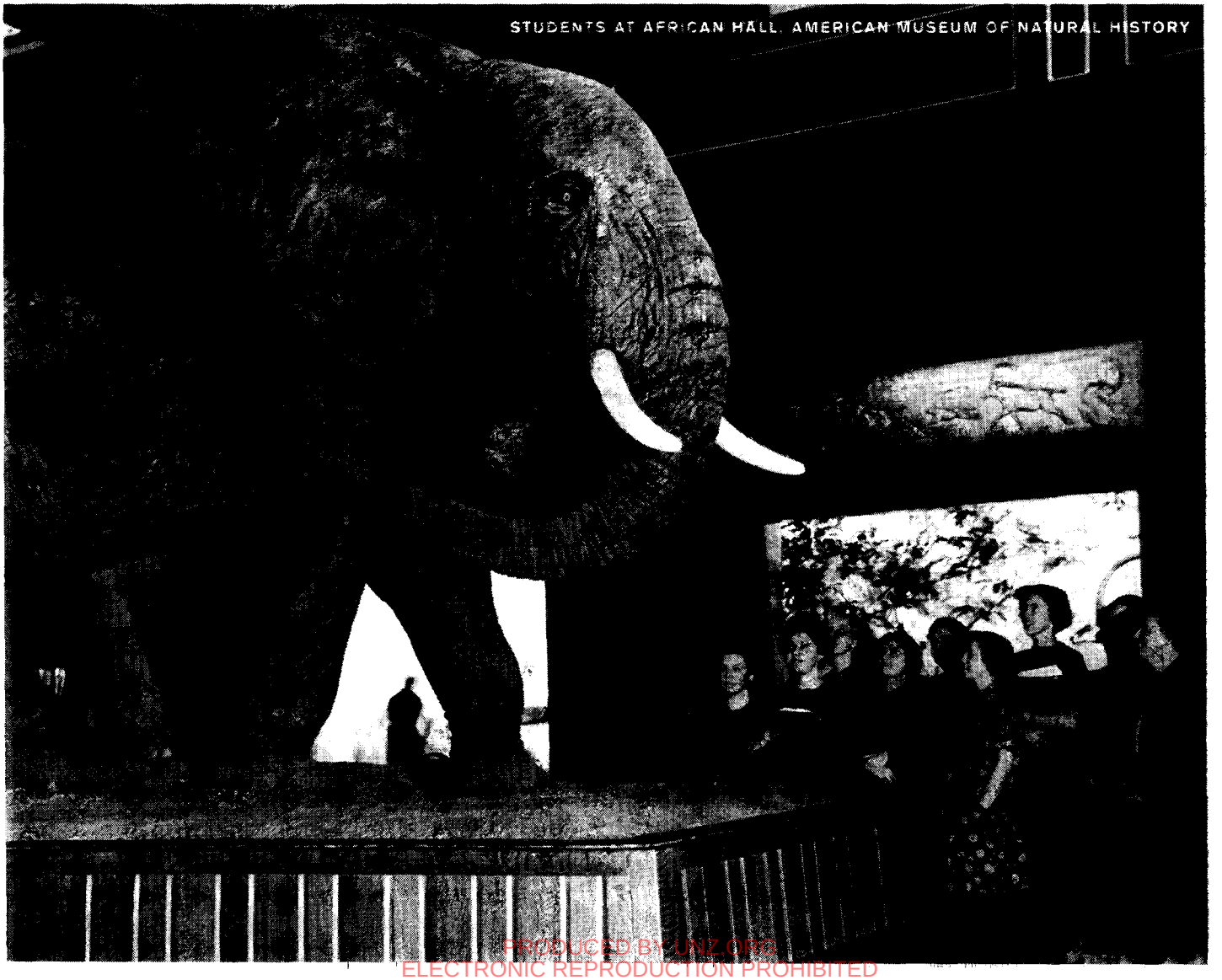

STUDENTS AT AFRICAN HALL, AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

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human knowledge and the world that human beings seek to know.

IN ORDER to bring these general remarks down to earth, I would like to look closely at one much-admired paper in cultural studies, Donna Haraway's "Teddy Bear Patriarchy: Taxidermy in the Garden of Eden, New York City, 1908–1936." This paper was first published in *Social Text* in 1984 and was later incorporated into Haraway's influential 1989 book, *Primate Visions.* The essay was singled out in a review of *Primate Visions* by the historian of science Margaret Rossiter as a "stellar" chapter; it was hailed in a 1991 collection of essays on "the poetics and politics of museum display" as "the most compelling analysis to date"; and it was reprinted in 1994 as an "exemplary" piece in a reader on social theory. If cultural studies has created its own canon, this essay has a strong claim to belong in it.

Haraway's essay presents New York City's American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) as an important participant in the politics of culture. She treats the powerful dioramas and artful taxidermy in the museum's African Hall as a readable text, one that purports to offer objective knowledge of the world of nature. In her view, however, the main purpose of African Hall is not to afford understanding of the natural world but to reproduce and naturalize a master narrative of race, class, and gender in a capitalist society.

The best way to grasp the hall's meaning, she implies, is to review its genesis—in this case, to tell the story of how its stuffed animal specimens were collected on African safaris: "I want to show the reader how the experience of the diorama grew from the safari in specific times and places, how the camera and the gun together are the conduits for the spiritual commerce of man and nature, how biography is woven into and from a social and political tissue." Incorporated in *Primate Visions,* the essay becomes part of a sprawling, multifaceted, ambitious attempt to describe Euro-American primate studies as a story Western science tells itself in ways that reproduce the social inequalities embedded in its own presuppositions. Considered on its own, the essay looks at the life of Carl Akeley, the taxidermist who designed African Hall, to show that the museum's exhibits display "a history of race, sex, and class in New York City." What is revealed in the hall is not Africa but America, "a tale of the commerce of power and knowledge in white and male supremacist monopoly capitalism."

At this point, a skeptical reader should be on guard—the leap from the specifics of reading a museum exhibit to these wooden and formulaic abstractions is risky, especially when the abstractions presume that "America" can be fully represented by a set of universal categories (white, male, capitalist) whose distinctly American inflection is nowhere broached. Still, the essay operates from what appears to be a sound sociological premise—that, as the late UC-San Diego sociologist César Graña wrote, "museums...have ideologies."

IN HER CELEBRATED ESSAY, DONNA HARAWAY ARGUES THAT AFRICAN HALL REVEALS "A HISTORY OF RACE, SEX, AND CLASS IN NEW YORK CITY."

So, on guard or not, readers move on to a few engaging pages in which Haraway takes them into the museum through its great Central Park West facade, past the gift shop (stopping to read a photobiography of Teddy Roosevelt), and into African Hall. Haraway is a perceptive guide; some of her remarks on the dioramas are striking, especially her observation that in each diorama "at least one animal...catches the viewer's gaze and holds it in communion." This is an informative tour, though it is not clear what justifies Haraway's pronouncement that "the central moral truth" of the museum is "the effective truth of manhood," which is "conferred" on the visitor who "passes through the trial of the museum." Apparently deriving this claim from some of Teddy Roosevelt's words on the walls just inside the main building, Haraway concludes that any visitor to the museum—in the 1920s or today—becomes "necessarily a boy in moral state." (Or, as revised for the book, "necessarily a white boy in moral state.")

As Haraway understands it, the hall's grand theme is the use of "the hygiene of nature" to "cure the sick vision of civilized man." But she never explains how this cure is effected or what it has to do with the intentions of master taxidermist Carl Akeley. How a ritual that symbolically brings "boys" through "the trial of the museum" into manhood is equally a curative rite to repair decadent civilization is a neat trick never explained. Are the boys sick and decadent, too? Or does the curative trip to the museum inoculate innocents against a decadence that has not yet affected them?

Of course, the idea that "nature" can be a cure for the ills wrought by civilization is a long-standing theme in American thought, well marked in *Walden* and extending back at least to the agrarianism of Thomas Jefferson. But it does not necessarily entail the pessimism and sense of decline Haraway rightly sees in the views of some museum trustees. After all, it is possible to seek solace, even salvation, in nature without holding grand and dark views about the corruption of civilization. One of the most popular novelists of the 1910s and 1920s was Gene Stratton Porter, whose novels were among the top ten best-sellers in 1918, 1919, 1921, and 1925. Her belief in the redemptive quality of nature could not have been further removed from the cultural pessimism that Haraway attributes to the museum leaders. ("'Good cheer! Good cheer!' exulted the Cardinal," is the opening of Stratton Porter's sunny account of bird life in *The Song of the Cardinal.*) Readers who felt lost or displaced in the onrushing, urbanizing society of the Twenties may have found solace in her pastoral ethic, but Stratton Porter herself seems to have shared none of the anxiety of the museum trustees.

So some people fretted about that "sick vision" of civilized society a good deal more than others. But Haraway does not specify where anxiety about civilization was located and how it was channeled. She suggests that Carl Akeley and the trustees believed civilization to be sick and the encounter with nature to be a possible cure. Yet the trustees may have worried more about socializing the not-

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yet-civilized than about redeeming the civilized. After all, a large part of the museum's educational function was to reinforce the social control of New York's immigrants—not to provide therapy for its civilized elites. Museum president Henry Fairfield Osborn was frank about his hopes to reach the urban masses: "Nature teaches law and order and respect for property. If these people cannot go to the country, then the Museum must bring nature to the city." Haraway herself used this quotation as an epigraph for the version of "Teddy Bear Patriarchy" that appeared in *Primate Visions*. But it works against, or at the very least complicates, her argument.

Haraway's talk of "moral boys" and "sick civilization" may be just a bit of rhetorical excess as she warms to her theme. But these terms keep her from ever addressing the question of what message real-life visitors to the museum took from the exhibit. Haraway knows that different people experience a museum in different ways. But how exactly are readers to understand her insistence that African Hall encodes a single narrative about white, patriarchal capitalism and that it situates every visitor to the museum as a "boy in moral state"?

What I take to be going on here is a kind of experiment in interpretation. That it ultimately fails, as I will try to demonstrate, is no crime; that the essay is cited reverently rather than answered critically, however, should give us pause about the culture of cultural studies. This is not to deny the achievement of "Teddy Bear Patriarchy" as an original attempt to direct attention to museums as cultural constructions. My objection is not to the aim of the essay but to the superficiality of its sociology and its oddly ahistorical history. My objection, further, is to its celebrity. The wide use of the essay and the deference to its canonical standing seem to signal an interpretive community that shares with it several central assumptions. The first of these is that the important thing to know about the cultural world is that the discourses that govern it are the constructions of a system of monopoly capitalism and white patriarchy. The second is that it is an act of political virtue and intellectual courage to demonstrate the constructedness of these discourses or of the cultural artifacts to which they give rise. Finally, it is presumed in Haraway's essay (though not everywhere in her writings) that such demonstrations override any need to inquire about whether, how, or to what degree some aspect of what we can only term "reality" nonetheless constrains a given discourse.

I LEAVE aside now the question of how real people read museums.

CARL AKELEY IN SOMALILAND

Haraway's approach is literary rather than sociological. It tells us nothing about what meaning actual visitors take from African Hall. But it can still be examined on its own terms. Is the approach Haraway adopts to interpretation convincing in its own right?

Her essay relies on a series of synecdoches; in each instance, a single part of the museum stands for the larger whole. Each of these conversions has to be convincing for the analysis to succeed. That is, the reader must be won to the view that, first, the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial entry and African Hall stand adequately for the AMNH. No other part of the museum ever speaks in this essay—no dinosaurs, no Margaret Mead Hall of Pacific Peoples, no Stephen Jay Gould columns in the museum's magazine, *Natural History*.

The second synecdochic link is that the meaning of African Hall lies in the original plans that were drawn up for it and in the collecting, by gun and photograph, of the materials that were to go into its dioramas. This link makes a powerful claim of authorship on behalf of safari leader, taxidermist, and great white hunter Carl Akeley, whose life history takes up much of the essay. The fact that African Hall did not open until ten years after Akeley's death is mentioned, but no mention is made of how his original plans may have been altered by the passage of a decade; indeed, no mention is made of just how extensive or complete his conception of African Hall was at any point.

This second link may be justified—I have no evidence to the contrary. But museums are complex organizations that compete in a sometimes hostile environment for public notice, private donations, and academic approval. In Haraway's account, there is only a broad cultural discourse represented by the museum's trustees, the museum's president, Henry Fairfield Osborn, and the mastermind of African Hall, Carl Akeley. This discourse goes into the museum machinery at one end and the African Hall exhibits come out the other. In between, a void: no social organization, no social conflict, no contention.

And no passage of time. The third synecdoche is that African Hall in 1921 (the year, Haraway reveals as if uncovering the deep secret core, of both a key collecting safari and the AMNH-hosted Second International Eugenics Conference), or perhaps in 1926 (the year of Akeley's death), or at least in 1936 (the year of the hall's opening), represents the unaltered meaning of African

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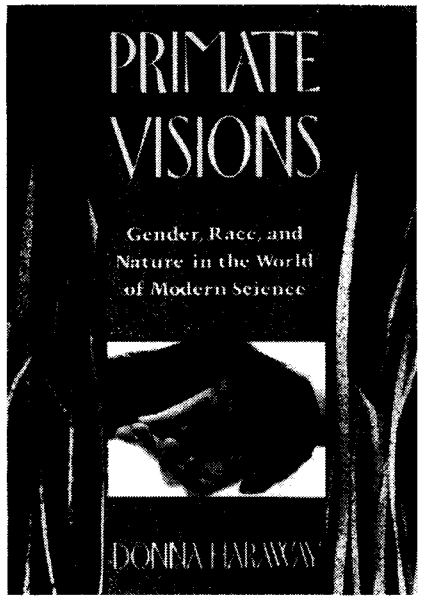
Hall at the time of Haraway's essay in the 1980s. As white patriarchal monopoly capitalism is a transhistorical structure, so apparently are its expressions and representations. That the meaning of a cultural object can change over time does not stir Haraway's interest, at least in the main body of her essay.

But if there's anything that recent work in cultural history has established, it's precisely the variability of an object's meanings. We know, from Lawrence Levine, that Shakespeare was popular melodrama in America in 1850 and a high-culture classic by 1920. And we know, from John Higham, that even the meanings of cultural objects more fixed than a dramatic text—at least as fixed in time as a diorama—change radically in their meanings. In the 1880s the Statue of Liberty was taken to be a symbol of how American republican government, established with the aid of France during the Revolution, served as a beacon to the world. By the Twenties and fully by 1940, it came to have a meaning never dreamed of by any of the individuals or groups responsible for its development and installation in New York Harbor. It came to mean "Welcome to America!" It became an inspirational greeting to new immigrants, a meaning the immigrants themselves conferred on the statue. But Haraway generally proceeds as if the African Hall dioramas are preserved in historic amber, untouchable by the shifting interactions of text and context.

In her conclusion, Haraway does finally acknowledge that "basic ideologies and politics shifted." And, in the *Primate Visions* version of her essay, she adds that "even the racial doctrines so openly championed by the Museum were publicly criticized in the 1940s, though not until then." But this nod to history is too little and too late. And it does nothing to complicate her assertions about the museum's "central moral truth." Moreover, she is just plain wrong to claim that scientific racism was not publicly criticized until the 1940s. Haraway cites John Higham's *Send These to Me* (1975), but she doesn't appear to have noticed one of its central points:



"As early as the late 1920s, a decline of racism in intellectual circles set in. The eugenics movement waned; the Nordic cult lost its vogue. The change reflected the emancipation of American thought from biological determinism."

EACH OF Haraway's synecdochic links stretches her materials to the breaking point. If we tried to walk a similar interpretive path with different materials, her sleight of hand might be more visible. For instance, let me propose that the essence of New York University is represented in its imposing Elmer Holmes Bobst Library, completed in 1973 as part of a major redesign and development of the Washington Square campus. Further, let me argue that the meaning of the library is biographically located in its architect, the modern master Philip Johnson. Johnson, into the late Thirties, was attracted to the Nazis. He was a vocal fascist sympathizer, and, like others who spoke the language of eugenics, he was anxious about "race suicide." If I am of a mind to see fascism as the dark truth of capitalism, I can proceed to argue with a logic parallel to Haraway's in "Teddy Bear Patriarchy" that the truth of NYU is fascism. I do not need to know what NYU students or faculty read or write any more than Haraway needs to know what visitors to the AMNH experience; I do not need to complicate the story with the plural or changing meanings of NYU to be assured that I have reached the central moral truth of the institution. If NYU is its library, the library its architect, and its architect a fascist, NYU is fascist.

If I made such an argument, would it be seriously entertained? Would people judge my work "stellar," "compelling," and "exemplary"? I do not think so. Why, then, has Haraway's essay escaped close scrutiny? Why has an argument stretched so thin seemed so attractive to so many? Her argument's logic is just the same: AMNH is its African Hall, African Hall is Akeley's and Osborn's visions, their visions were rankly racist and sexist, so the AMNH is racist and sexist, or an example of Teddy Bear Patriarchy.

Part of the appeal of Haraway's essay, no doubt, is its promise to take a close look at the racial thinking of the Twenties. About that Second International Eugenics Congress that the AMNH hosted in 1921: Haraway is onto something here. AMNH leaders were indeed important figures in an effort mounted on behalf of scientific racism at the time. The trouble lies in her implication that this campaign was typical of racial discourse in the time span her essay surveys. The eugenics movement, after all, lost the battle for the hearts and minds of the American elite. In the Thirties and Forties, scientific racism gave way to a greater recognition and acceptance of cultural differences. And no one played a more significant role in this development than a former AMNH employee, Franz Boas, the most politically influential and very likely the most intellectually important American anthropologist ever.

SO WHY does Haraway highlight the 1921 conference as if it were especially indicative of the moral truth of AMNH? Why not the fact that the Eugenics Congress's next international conference, in 1932, also in New York, attracted fewer than one hundred people? Or the fact that later in AMNH history a hall would be dedicated to Boas's student Margaret Mead? Indeed, it is probably fair to say that the museum is today more closely identified with Mead than with

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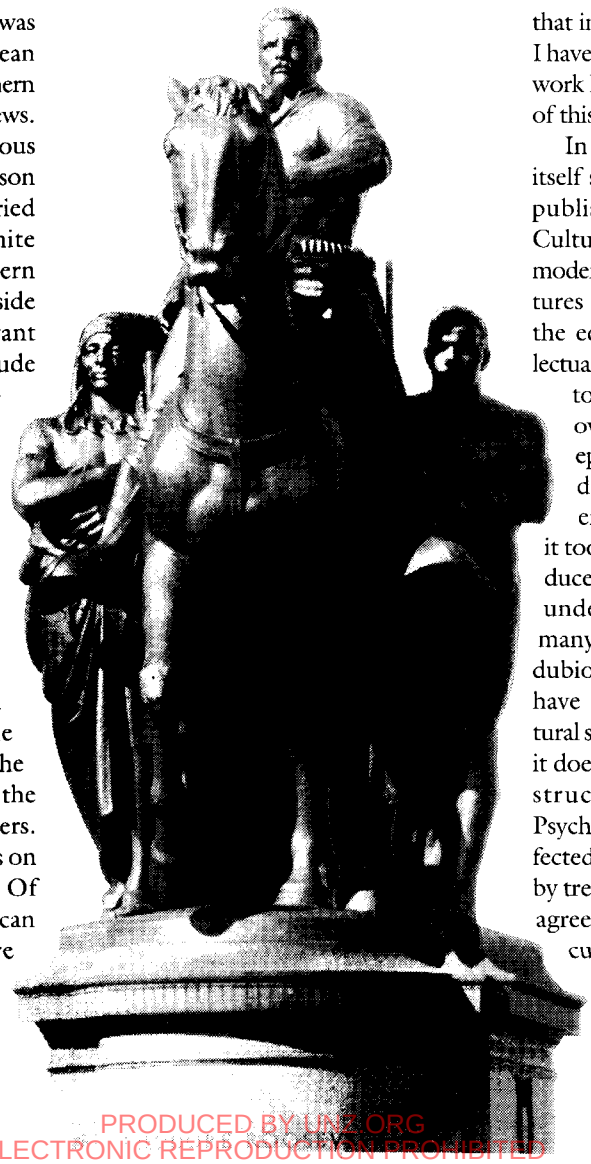
Teddy Roosevelt or the relatively unknown Carl Akeley. Haraway reports correctly that eugenics was a significant movement in 1921, coloring the views of museum trustees and officials. But she fails to mention the conclusion of Higham and others that it was essentially dead by the time African Hall opened.

If description and historical accuracy were important here, the AMNH's connection to race, class, and gender would have been contextualized so readers could actually understand it. Haraway fails to do this. Implicit in today's coding of "class, gender, race" is that "race" refers to a distinction between white and nonwhite rather than, as was the case among Protestant elites in the Twenties, between Nordic and non-Nordic. Certainly racism toward African Americans was part of the worldview of New York Protestant elites in the Twenties. Nineteenth-century Americans were taught in school about a hierarchy of races, with Caucasians invariably deemed the highest and Negroes the lowest. But the language of race shifted at the turn of the century, and the racial divide that elites worried most about was between people of northern European heritage and the immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, particularly the Jews.

Haraway observes that the notorious popularizer of scientific racism, Madison Grant, an AMNH trustee, was worried about "the importation of nonwhite (which included Jewish and southern European) working classes." This aside is misleading. The immigrants Grant worried about did not simply include Jewish and southern Europeans—this was the *primary* group that troubled and threatened him. In his influential racist tract *The Passing of the Great Race* (1916), a work that identifies its author as a trustee of the AMNH and includes a preface by Henry Fairfield Osborn, Grant makes this abundantly clear. He devotes the book to showing the differences among "the three main races of Europe"—the Nordic, the Alpine, and the Mediterranean, and the point of the book is to demonstrate the superiority of the Nordic to the others. Grant mentions but in no way dwells on "Negroids" and "Mongoloids." Of course, racism directed against African Americans runs more deeply, more centrally, and more enduringly in American history than prejudice against Jews and southern and eastern Europeans. But this is not what was at stake in Grant's work.

The problem here is not only the imprecision about what "race" meant to the originators of African Hall. It is a failure to recognize how badly scientific racism was reeling by the Thirties, how genuine was the Boasian victory. Indeed, a new and powerful intelligentsia committed to a cosmopolitan vision of the world transcending race and ethnicity emerged and came to dominate intellectual life from 1930 into the Sixties, as historian David Hollinger has argued. A powerful liberal consensus developed, cutting right across the lines that the Madison Grants of the world had wanted to keep strictly separate.

Of course, that liberal consensus was never complete. Anti-Semitic, anti-immigrant, and above all anti-black sentiment persisted and persists. But if the liberal consensus continues to be challenged, it remains very much alive. Many of this tradition's leading figures from the Twenties and Thirties, such as Walter Lippmann, Franz Boas, and John Dewey, are still read and argued about, while Madison Grant is at most a historical footnote. By what screwball logic, then, does Haraway land on Grant as the animating spirit of the white patriarchal capitalist vision that dominates American society?



AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

WHY does it matter if Haraway got the history wrong, so long as her main point—that science is socially constructed in the service of power—remains correct?

If the past is dead and should be dead, as Haraway seems to believe, then it really doesn't matter a whit. But if, as William Faulkner put it, "the past is never dead. It's not even past," then it makes a very big difference that Haraway translated the Twenties "Nordic" into the Eighties "white" and blended in her postmodern Cuisinart the liberalism of Boas with the racism of Grant. If it is worth knowing what achievements in our past we can draw on for strength and inspiration, then the errors here are serious, and it is shocking that in the ten reviews of *Primate Visions* I have read, and the many mentions of the work I have come upon, not once has any of this been noted.

In the end, it is not Haraway's essay itself so much as the absence of serious published criticism that disturbs me. Cultural studies, especially in its postmodernist or poststructuralist vein, has features of a social movement and some of the edgy self-confidence of prior intellectual movements—psychoanalysis comes to mind. Psychoanalysis developed its own critical terminology, it offered an epistemology that ran counter to standard scientific practices, it promised emancipation through critique, and it took on a messianic cast. It also introduced new methods and frameworks for understanding human behavior that many people, even those who remain dubious about the project as a whole, have found valuable. Postmodern cultural studies may be following suit. I hope it does not follow psychoanalysis in constructing defense mechanisms. Psychoanalysis is famous for having perfected a method of discounting criticism by treating it as a symptom—"if you disagree, you are resisting." I see signs that cultural studies is succumbing to that sort of solipsism. It needs not

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BY ASSUMING THAT POLITICAL AND MORAL PRESUPPOSITIONS ARE BEYOND RATIONAL DEBATE, CULTURAL STUDIES COCOONS THE LEFT FROM HAVING TO DEAL WITH THE RIGHT.

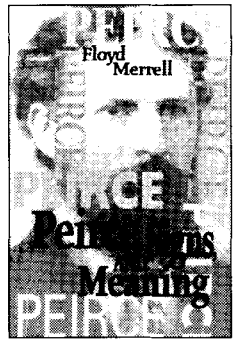
only to generate criticism from within its own set of political assumptions (which it does, often and heatedly) but to respond to criticism that calls those assumptions into question.

CULTURAL studies correctly emphasizes that no knowledge is innocent. But this dictum also applies to the fervent belief that "no knowledge is innocent." That claim serves ends just as the claim of scientists or journalists to objectivity does. Most obviously, it is a rationalization for expanding and making relevant the fading place of literary studies in our culture. It also protects political presuppositions from critical examination because it takes for granted that political and moral presuppositions are beyond rational debate. They are discourse in the service of power.

This shortchanges everybody. It cocoons the left from having to deal with the right—surely a bad idea at a time when the left's presence seems to be evaporating in the culture at large. Oddly enough, it also diminishes culture. If culture is only the discursive shaping and serving of power, there is no place for the radical assertion that power is designed and valued to serve culture. Take, for example, Clifford Geertz's *Negara* (1980), which argues that the elaborate court ceremonies of the Balinese state were not designed to reinforce the rulers' power but rather that the rulers' grasping for power was driven by their desire to perform and control the ceremonies. In a similar vein, Chandra Mukerji argues in *From Graven Images* (1983) that the industrial revolution served to justify a fashion for calicoes; it wasn't, Mukerji believes, that a fashion for calicoes served to enrich the emerging industrial bourgeoisie. If anything, culture is more important, not less important, than the theoretical presuppositions of cultural studies acknowledge. The tendency to reduce culture to the emanations of preconstituted power positions trivializes culture and ignores the complexity of politics. To improve on this with the familiar claim that culture is "contested terrain" is no solution. Yes, culture is contested terrain. And, yes—thanks in part to cultural studies—we can now say, "of course it is." But when we say that, we have reached the beginning, not the end, of analysis.

Michael Schudson is professor of communication and adjunct professor of sociology at the University of California at San Diego. A different version of this article will appear this fall in *From Sociology to Cultural Studies,* a collection of essays edited by Elizabeth Long (Blackwell).

Peirce, Signs, and Meaning



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continued from page 5

story up; the man never existed. The linguistic context DePew thought he was operating in, at least initially, was one in which violent fantasies are traded as part of sex play. The government introduced DePew's stories as evidence of his intent to carry out a snuff film scheme *invented by these undercover cops*, one that DePew was lured into solely to obtain a conspiracy conviction. (The cops, who, by the way, made similar "confessions," are, needless to say, still walking the streets.)

The argument of my book is that the erosion of the fantasy-fact distinction has had pretty dire social consequences, legitimating entrapment cases like this one (not to mention perpetuating these endless debates over pornography). If DePew *had* ever committed nonconsensual violence, there'd be no point in my writing about the case. The whole point was that he hadn't: This was a case of violent fantasy. DePew may have been guilty of massively bad judgment about contexts, but fantasizing about playing a role in a snuff film isn't the same thing as intent to enact those fantasies in the world, and there was no evidence he took any action to carry them out. DePew will spend most of his life in prison because fantasy and intent were treated as indistinguishable, and Lord's use of the word "confession" to describe a fantasy has the (surely unintended) effect of uncritically taking the government's position in the case.

For DePew's sake, I'd like to see this error corrected, but there's a larger issue as well. Treating fantasies as legal evidence is an enormous abridgment of basic freedoms, and assenting to that abridgment without even a protest is nothing less than disastrous for all spheres of expression, even those far removed from pornography or sexual speech.

LAURA KIPNIS
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
DEPARTMENT OF RADIO-TELEVISION-FILM
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

EAT, DRINK, MAN, WOMAN

In "Does Man Eat Man?" [*LF*, April/May], Lawrence Osborne quotes me as saying that Timothy White's analysis of data from the Anasazi Indian site at Mancos is "the best scientific work ever done on cannibalism by anyone." I'll stick by that, with the emphasis on *scientific*, since there are other ways one might proceed. Archaeology can sometimes tease amazing clues about cultural context out of the flimsiest remains, from tiny teethmarks to organic dust. White is as good at that as anyone. However, hard evidence of cannibalism does not necessarily constitute evidence of customary consumption. Mancos may represent nothing more broadly based than a case of survival cannibalism, despite the number of individuals involved as probable victims (twenty-nine). White's work does *not* allow us to say—as White makes clear and Osborne does not—that the cannibalism at Mancos was customary Anasazi behavior. The

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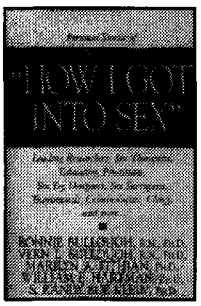

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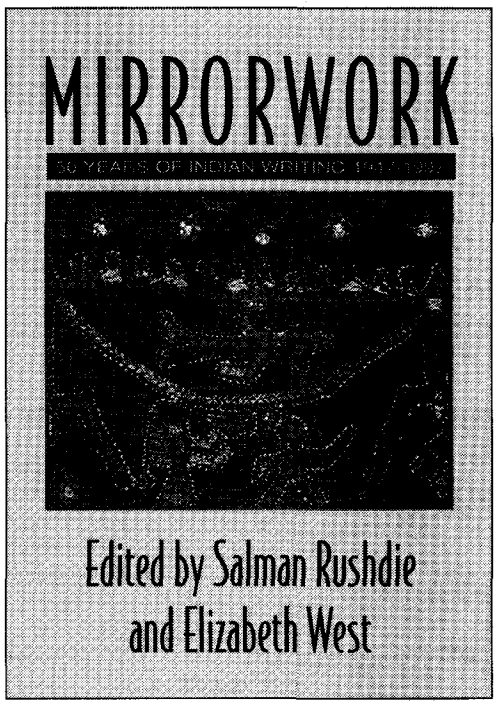

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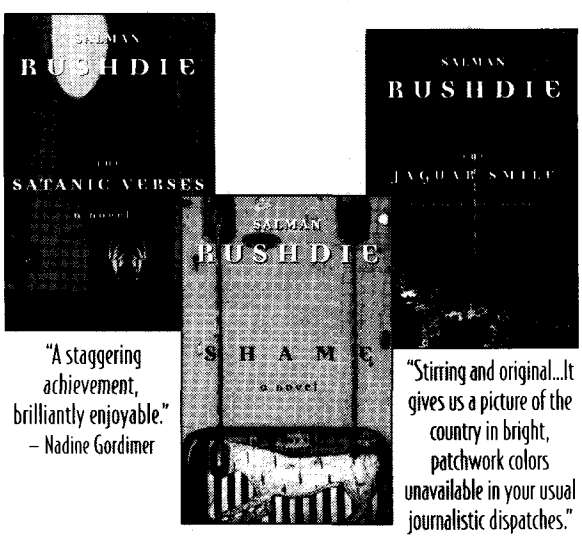

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Mancos experience might be no more typical in the culture of its time than was the famed Andes plane crash that offered an opportunity for a starving and frozen rugby team to commit its desperate acts. Opportunity and need sometimes make strange dinner companions.

IVAN BRADY
PROFESSOR OF ANTHROPOLOGY
SUNY OSWEGO

The most striking fact in Lawrence Osborne's extremely informative article about the cannibalism controversy is the genesis of William Arens's notion that cannibalism is a myth: While doing fieldwork in Tanzania, Arens learned that Africans believe Europeans are cannibals.

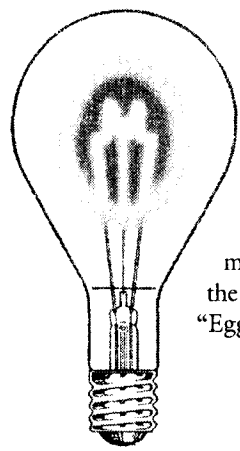
My question: Why did it never occur to Arens that Africans are correct in their belief? In the West, we routinely harvest blood, bone marrow, and organs from one human body to be ingested by another—as good a definition of cannibalism as any. Our culture views this practice as necessary and beneficial to health and life, though it is horrifying to those who live at our margins. (Central America, for example, is awash in rumors that kidnapping rings steal children there to furnish U.S. hospitals with organs.)

Why does it seem so unlikely to Arens that any other culture might have similarly believed that the absorption of parts of one human body by another is beneficial? In his essay on cannibals, Montaigne was primarily interested in what the cannibals could tell him about Europe. But Arens and too many other cultural critics inadvertently perpetuate the imperialism they so deplore by their continuing failure to acknowledge that those outside the West can tell us something about ourselves.

ESTHER ALLEN
NEW YORK, NY

CORRECTION

In "The Long Goodbye" (*LF*, June/July), it was erroneously stated that the University of California's Board of Regents passed the anti-affirmative action resolution SP-1 by a vote of fourteen to nine with one abstention. In fact, the vote was fourteen to ten with one abstention.



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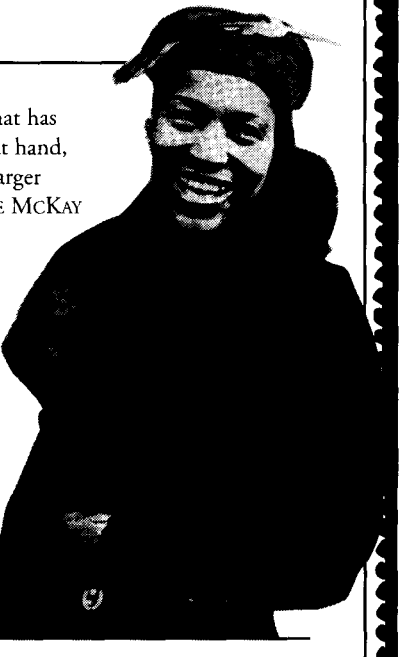

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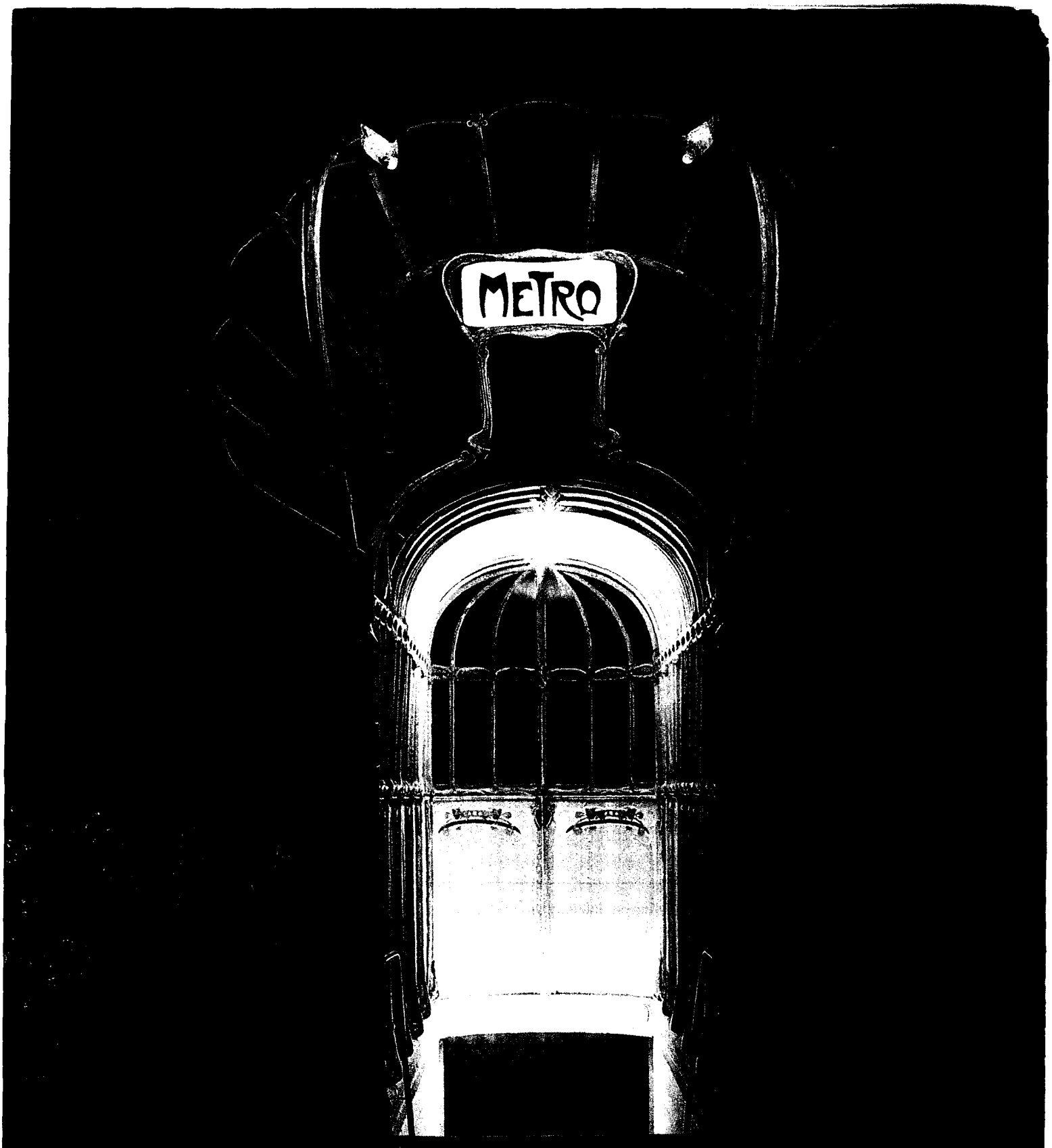

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